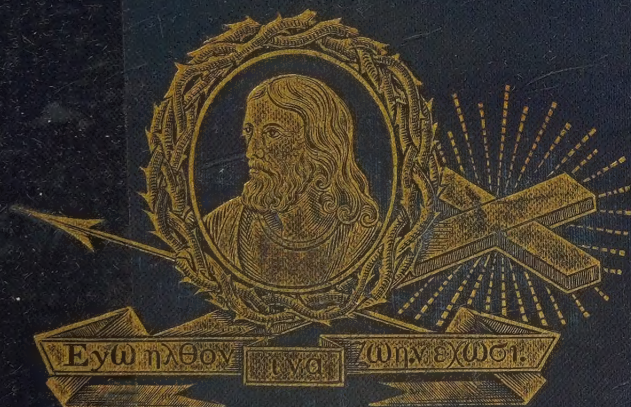


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... was also ... was the ...
... in the East ~~He~~ He had but abundance says
He ... the ... the noble ...
His ... was full of ~~glory~~ ...
path was ... with ^{the} ... of ...
... Richard ... of all) His ...
... He is two children ~~children~~ at one time

words are the most powerful of
all weapons) the adum of a ...
more than a common

He has been thus in mind that-ent
persecution does not produce contentment of the
not not content with what they have so
rather wouldst than be content
though they possessed more than
in the spirit was such. He was a
wretched as he was ^{the poor man of} contentment
~~is~~ out a notion of ~~not~~ ~~the~~ the
of worldly abundance it is not a notion
earth at all the seed corn for abun-
content is an unfulfilled plant ~~you will find~~
is found in the mind but it is fed
(the dream of greed)

the dark clouds by which the B...
the Son of Man do give his
Scripture & the Father's love & are made
shall now pass away -
THE HOMILIST, *v. 12.*

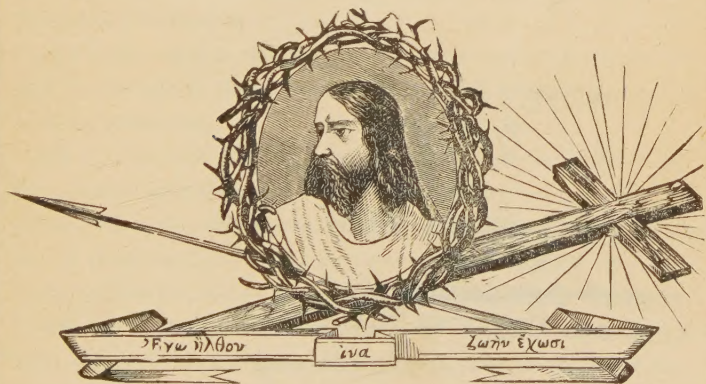
no dusky veil shall cast its dark
shadow on the
these things are
CONDUCTED BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.,

Compiler of "The Biblical Liturgy," Author of "The Philosophy
of Happiness," "The Practical Philosopher," "Genius
of the Gospel," etc., etc.
Refined in sentiment -
COMPILER OF "THE BIBLICAL LITURGY," AUTHOR OF "THE PHILOSOPHY
OF HAPPINESS," "THE PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER," "GENIUS
OF THE GOSPEL," ETC., ETC.

VOL. XII. EDITOR'S SERIES.

VOLUME XXXVII. FROM COMMENCEMENT.



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PREFACE.

THIS Volume, the THIRTY-SEVENTH of the HOMILIST, is the twelfth and the last of the Editor's Series.

Although upwards of ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND volumes have been sold, it will be gratifying for our friends to know that the demand is as great as ever, and that a new Series is called for. This Series will be much *larger* than any of the preceding ones, will contain a greater variety of matter, and have an additional Editor and many new Contributors.

As the old key-note will still rule the melodies of the HOMILIST, and no new specific description is requisite, the former Preface may be again transcribed.

"First: The book has no *finish*. The Editor has not only not the time to give an artistic finish to his productions, but not even the *design*. Their incompleteness is *intentional*. He has drawn some marble slabs together, and hewn them roughly, but has left other hands to delineate minute features, and so polish them into beauty. He has dug up from the Biblical mine some precious ore, smelted a little, but left all the smithing to others. He has presented 'germs,' which, if sown in good soil, under a free air and an open sky, will produce fruit that may draw many famishing spirits into the vineyard of the Church.

"Secondly: The book has no *denominationalism*. It has no special reference to '*our* Body' or to '*our* Church.' As denominational strength is not necessarily *soul* strength, nor denominational religion necessarily the religion of humanity, it is the aim of the HOMILIST to minister that which universal man requires. It is for man as a citizen of the universe, and not for him as the limb of a sect.

“Thirdly : The book has no *polemical Theology*. The Editor—holding, as he does, with a tenacious grasp, the *cardinal* doctrines which constitute what is called the ‘orthodox creed’—has, nevertheless, the deep and ever-deepening conviction, first, that such creed is but a very small portion of the truth that God has revealed or that man requires ; and that no theological system can fully represent all the contents and suggestions of the great Book of God ; and, secondly, that systematic theology is but means to an end. *Spiritual morality is that end*. Consequently, to the *heart and life* every Biblical thought and idea should be directed. Your systems of divinity the author will not disparage ; but his impression is, that they can no more answer the purpose of the Gospel than *pneumatics* can answer the purpose of the atmosphere. In the case of Christianity, as well as the air, the world can live without its scientific truths ; but it must have the free flowings of their vital elements. Coleridge has well said, ‘Too soon did the doctors of the Church forget that the heart—the moral nature—was the beginning and the end, and that truth, knowledge, and insight were comprehended in its expansion.’

“The Editor would record his grateful acknowledgments to those free spirits of all Churches who have so earnestly rallied round him, to the many who have encouraged him by their letters, and to those especially who have aided him by their valuable contributions. May the ‘last day’ prove that the help rendered has been worthily bestowed ; and that the HOMILIST did something towards the spiritual education of humanity, in its endeavors to bring the Bible, through the instrumentality of the pulpit, into a more immediate and practical contact with the every-day life of man.”

DAVID THOMAS.

*Erewyn, Upper Tulse Hill,
London.*

CONTENTS.

All the Articles in this Volume are written by the Editor, with the exception of those which have a Signature attached.

HOMILIES.

	PAGE
Practical Spiritualism	1
Nehushtan (W. Clarkson)	65
All Things Working together for Good (W. H. Brookfield)	129
Our Lord's First Purification of the Temple (Schleiermacher, X.)	193
A Wrong Social and Religious Idea (W. K. Lea)	257
Biblical Holiness	321

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

An Old Sermon on a Subject ever New	10, 74
The Religion of Man	139
The Mere Formalist and the Spiritualist in Religion	197
A Portrait of a Genuine Penitent	263, 333

HOMILETIC SKETCHES ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

A Blessed Consciousness, A Sublime Reflection, and a Moral Sadness	14
Great Crimes not always followed by Great Punishment in this Life	81
Exalted Ideas of God, and Humbling Ideas of Man	145
Righteous Sarcasm	201
The Transcendent Greatness of God	269
A Solemn Asseveration, a Noble Determination, and a Weighty Reflection	339

SERMONIC GLANCES AT THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

Christ as a Religious Teacher	18
The Woman taken in Adultery	86
The Light of the World	149

	PAGE
Christ's Superhuman Claim	204
Divine Providence	275
Christ and Men	344

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

Daniel's Dream of the Four Beasts (Dr. Kiel)	49, 111
Dean Alford's Greek Testament (Dr. Davidson)	173
The Christian Race (W. Lindsay, D.D.)	234
The Righteousness of God (C. E. T.)	299

GERMS OF THOUGHT.

Christian Life a Growth (W. Currie)	25
Sermonic Notes on the Visions of Ezekial (Urijah R. Thomas):—	
XX. The River of Life, an Emblem of Living Christianity	27
XXI. The Name of the City; God's Presence the full Blessed-	
ness of His People	97
Heaven's Hallelujah Chorus (F. W. Brown)	91
Investigation the Way to Faith (Urijah R. Thomas)	94
Precious Seeds (T. Kelly)	96
God's Fire Men (Ibid.)	152
Pastors and Teachers (J. H. C.)	155
Lot's Wife a Beacon (E. D. Solomon)	156
The Drama of Life (P. L. Davis)	209
Herod the Tetrarch	215
Telegraph between Earth and Heaven (T. Kelly)	278
"Tongues in Trees" (F. W. Brown)	282
The Voice from Heaven (Urijah R. Thomas)	346

THE PREACHER'S FINGER-POST.

	PAGE		PAGE
The World's Greatest Bless-		The Highest Human Bene-	
ing and its Greatest Evil	33	diction on the Highest	
The Mercy of Christ in the		Class of Men	103
Conversion of Sinners	36	The Glory of a Truly Good	
God's Incomprehensible		Man	104
Greatness illustrated by		Christianity a Transcend-	
Little Things	38	ental System	105
The Genuine Christian	40	The Proclamation of Cyrus	
The Leading Foe and the		and the Proclamation	
Leading Friend of Hu-		of the Gospel Minister	
manity	41	Compared	159
Contrast Between this Life		The Religious Capability of	
and the Life to Come	42	Man	161

	PAGE		PAGE
God's Love for Man . . .	162	XXXII. Joseph's Promo-	
Soul-pondering on Divine		tion in Egypt . . .	287
Subjects . . .	165	Unconditional Trust in God	
Religious Fanaticism . . .	218	(J. S. Swan) . . .	289
Holy Dead . . .	221	Covetousness . . .	290
The Divinity of a True Man.	222	Personal Christliness . . .	292
Inquiry of the Past (T. B.) .	224	Godliness in all Conditions	
The Condition of Spiritual		of Life . . .	351
Power (T. Baron) . . .	225	The Two Cups of Life; or,	
Sketches from Genesis		Moral Incompatibilities.	353
(Cymru):—		Christmas: God in Christ .	355

SEEDS OF SERMONS FROM THE MINOR PROPHETS.

AMOS.		CXIV. An Old Sin . . .	171
CVII. The Restoration of		CXV. Social Retribution	227
the True Moral		CXVI. The True Church,	
Theocracy . . .	44	or the Community	
OBADIAH.		of the Good. (1) A	
CVIII. God and Bad Men	48	Beneficent Power	229
CIX. Pride . . .	107	CXVII. Ibid. (2) A Con-	
CX. God in Retribution	109	suming Power . . .	231
CXI. Social Cruelty. (1)		CXVIII. Ibid. (3) An Ag-	
A Sin against the		gressive Power . . .	231
Creator . . .	166		
CXII. Ibid. (2) Perpetrated		MICAH.	
Against a Brother,		CXIX. Divine Revelation	294
specially Offense		CXX. God's Procedure	
to God . . .	168	in Relation to Sin	295
CXIII. Ibid. (3) As Work-		CXXI. Moral Incurable-	
ing in Various		ness . . .	297
Forms from Gen-		CXXII. Be Quick . . .	357
eration to Genera-		CXXIII. Avarice . . .	359
tion . . .	169	CXXIV. God's Truth. . .	360

THE CHIEF FOUNDERS OF THE CHIEF FAITHS.

BY URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Second Series.

IV. Jesus and Zoroaster . . .	308
-------------------------------	-----

SCIENTIFIC FACTS USED AS SYMBOLS.

BY A NATURALIST.

	PAGE
The Pig and the Reptiles,—Coarse Natures in Useful Employment,	55
The Wild Ass,—Easy Subjugation	56
The Falcon and the Partridge,—The Stupifying Effects of Fear .	57
The Peacock,—Appearance Contrasting with Character . . .	57
The Chemical Experiment,—Nature's Method of Answering Man's Questions	120
The Ephemera,—The Transient	121
The Snake and its Skin,—External Change does not necessarily imply Total Alteration	121
Invertebrate Animals,—Great Power in Little Workers . . .	122
The Ichneumon Tribe,—The Instinct and Operations of Error .	249
The Magpie,—Memory's Mode of Appropriation	250
Animals and their Clothing,—The Plan on which Nature Affords Assistance.	250
The Black Panther and the Natives,—Reputation without Reality.	251
The Balanus,—Age altering Habit	312
Solar Rays,—Human Opinions Concerning God	313
The Eciton,—Warriors the Followers of Insects	313
The Maggot,—Moral Transformations	314
The Rattlesnake,—Vice giving Warning of its Approach . . .	365
The Sparrow,—The Vigorous Mind requires a Healthy Atmosphere	365
The Tanghinia,—A Fallacious Test.	366

HOMILETICAL BRIEVIARIES, CLXXXII. TO CCVII.

	PAGE		PAGE
Christ's Wish about the		Reputation	181
Lord's Supper (U. R.		Moral Goodness	182
Thomas)	52	Vision of God	244
The Dead	53	Christ True	245
Religious Thoughtfulness. .	53	Practical Trust in Christ the	
Religious Revivals	54	Highest Honour	246
Divine Mercy in Human Afflic-		The Highest Service of Man	
tion	117	on Earth	247
A Guilty Conscience	118	The Holy Bible and Human	
Redemptive Truths, "Things"	119	Souls	303
Character	120	The Worship of Heaven . .	304
Two-fold Subjugation of Hu-		Autumn, a Season for National	
manity to God—Pharaoh		Instruction	304
and Paul	179	The Creator Ministering to	
Christ's Death a Man's De-		the Wants of His Crea-	
struction	180	tion	305

	PAGE		PAGE
Giving and Receiving (U. R. Thomas)	306	A Soul Conscious of its Dependence on God	362
Justified by Christ's Blood (J. Townley)	306	Relieving Thoughts concerning Death	363
Man Divinely Abandoned to his Lusts	361	The Rich Disciple (H. T. Miller)	364

THE PULPIT AND ITS HANDMAIDS.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

To-morrow (F. Jacox)	9
Life (Jeffrey)	51
Life.—Work and Wait.—Trust to Infinite Love	58
Humility.—Mental Moods.—Human Dependency.—Egotism	59
The Inner Man.—The Grave.—God in all.—The Kingdom that Cannot be Moved.—The Soul.—Worship.—Love.—The True Preacher	60
Happiness.—Warning.—The Gospel	61
A Cold Preacher (Lynch)	90
Love.—Affliction.—Holiness of Christ.—Truth in Consciousness.—Self Rule.—Confession.—Soul Growth.—Progress of Truth	123
The Power of Sympathy.—Worship.—The Virtuous Desire.—Virtuous Sincerity.—Practical Christianity.—Silence.—Good Wishes.—Sin and Suffering.—The Selfish alone anxious about Futurities	124
Death, its Nearness.—Friendship.—Preacher (Melville)	125
A Discursive yet Extraordinary Preacher (Haven).	165
Lazarus and his Sisters (T. Wells).	183
A Preacher (Mullois)	186
Life a Religion (McCormac)	200
The Oppressor and Oppressed (McCormac)	233
Death of Rev. C. G. Finney	252
Comfort in Prospect of Death.—Self Sacrifice (McCormac)	254
Psychology (Ibid)	268
The World a Paradise (Ibid.)	274
Pious Frauds (Ibid)	307
Diogenes and his Lantern.—Patronage of Phantasms (B. Chilow)	315
Intellectual Scaffolding.—Following in the Track	316
Bias of Thought.—Best Kind of Patience.—Impediments to Truth	317
Painted Truth.—Truth's Partial Votaries	318
Death a Stream	350
In Memoriam : Rev. David Thomas, B.A., of Bristol (Urijah R. Thomas)	367
True Preaching (<i>The Times</i>)	368

LITERARY NOTICES.

JULY.		OCTOBER.	
	PAGE		PAGE
The New Testament (S. Davidson, D.D.) . . .	61	Yayin	255
The Religion of Christ . . .	63	Romanism Weighed in the	
The Kernel of Truth . . .	64	Balance of the Scrip-	
Regeneration	64	tures and Fathers . . .	255
<hr/>		Dr. Whedon's Commentary	
AUGUST.		on the New Testament,	
The Kingdom of Christ . . .	126	Vol. III	256
Select Thoughts	128	Infant Baptism	256
<hr/>		Food for Faith	256
SEPTEMBER.		<hr/>	
The Winnow	187	NOVEMBER.	
Sermons by W. H. Brookfield . . .	188	The Relations of Christianity	
The Clergyman's Magazine,		and Science	318
Vol. I. Part 1.	190	Pastoral Theology	319
The Year of Salvation	191	Jesus in the Midst	320
The Everlasting Sign	191	Republication of Homilist,	
The Pastoral Care	192	Vols. I. to XI.	320
The Brighton Convention . . .	192	<hr/>	
<hr/>		DECEMBER.	
		Homilist, New Series, Pro-	
		spectus , , . . .	369

INDEX OF TEXTS.

Book.	Chap.	Verse.	Page.	Book.	Chap.	Verse.	Page.
Gen.	41	37-45	287	Job	30	23	363
Exodus	10	17	179	Job	36	26, 27	38
Deut.	4	32	224	Job	38	35	278
Deut.	32	29	53	Psalms	49	1-20	10, 74
1 Sam.	12	24	161	Psalms	50	1-15	139
2 Kings	9	20	218	Psalms	50	16-23	197
2 Kings	18	4	65	Psalms	51	1-19	263, 333
Ezra	1	1, 2	159	Psalms	81	12	361
Job	13	15	289	Psalms	92	12	282
Job	19	26	244	Psalms	97	11	96
Job	23	11-17	14	Psalms	119	133	362
Job	24	1-25	81	Psalms	145	16	305
Job	25	1-6	145	Jeremiah	31	3	162
Job	26	1-4	201	Lamentations	1	14	118
Job	26	5-14	269	Lamentations	3	31, 32	117
Job	27	1-10	339	Ezekiel	47	1-12	27

Book.	Chap.	Verse.	Page.	Book.	Chap.	Verse.	Page.
Ezekiel	47	13-23	97	John	8	13-19	204
Ezekiel	48	35	97	John	8	20	275
Daniel	7	4-8	49, 111	John	8	21	344
Joel	3	13	120	Acts	9	6	179
Amos	9	11-15	44	Acts	20	35	306
Obadiah	1	1	48	Romans	5	9	306
Obadiah	1	2-5	107	Romans	8	28	129
Obadiah	1	6-9	109	Romans	9	14-18	299
Obadiah	1	10, 11	168	Romans	14	11	179
Obadiah	1	10-14	171	Romans	14	15	180
Obadiah	1	10-16	166	Romans	14	16	181
Obadiah	1	12-16	169	Romans	14	17, 18	182
Obadiah	1	15	227	1 Cor.	1	17	33
Obadiah	1	17	229	1 Cor.	7	24	351
Obadiah	1	18	231	1 Cor.	9	19	247
Obadiah	1	19, 20	231	1 Cor.	10	21	353
Micah	1	1, 2	294	2 Cor.	5	7	1
Micah	1	3, 7	295	2 Cor.	5	19	355
Micah	1	8, 9	297	Ephesians	4	11	155
Micah	1	13	357	Ephesians	5	1	209
Micah	2	1-4	359	Ephesians	6	24	103
Micah	2	7	360	Philippians	4	19	40
Habakkuk	3	2	54	1 Thess.	1	6-8	222
Matthew	8	29	257	1 Timothy	1	16	36
Matthew	14	1, 2	215	Hebrews	2	1	119
Matthew	17	19-21	225	Hebrews	6	12	221
Matthew	22	16	245	Hebrews	12	1, 2	234
Matthew	27	57	364	Hebrews	13	5, 6	290
Luke	2	19	165	James	1	21	303
Luke	17	32	156	1 Peter	1	15, 16	321
Luke	20	34-36	42	1 Peter	2	7	246
Luke	20	38	53	1 Peter	4	10	292
Luke	22	15	52	2 Peter	3	18	25
Luke	22	31, 32	41	1 John	5	4	104
John	1	39, 46	94	Jude	1	23	152
John	2	13-17	193	Rev.	5	9	304
John	4	35	304	Rev.	14	13	346
John	8	1, 2	18	Rev.	15	3, 4	91
John	8	3-11	86	Rev.	22	1	105
John	8	12	149				



A HOMILY

ON

Practical Spiritualism.

“We walk by faith, not by sight.”—2 COR. v. 7.

WHAT does the writer mean by asserting that he and his fellow Christians walked “not by sight”? Did he ignore the material universe, or so underrate it as to pay it no attention? No. He observed it, he studied it, he admired it, he used it. The material, with its burning orbs above, its heaving oceans, flowing rivers, and majestic landscapes below, was to him a grand and ever-present reality. He speaks *comparatively*, and means that in the daily course of himself and his Corinthian brethren, they were influenced more by the invisible than the visible, by the spiritual and eternal than by the material and the temporal. They walked “by faith, not by sight.” They were practical spiritualists.

In relation to this course of life, we may observe:

I. It is a more PHILOSOPHIC course. Whatever the thoughtless multitudes or sceptic scientists may aver, a life of practical spiritualism is far more rational than that of practical materialism.

First : Because the spiritual is more *real* than the material. Whatever men may say to the contrary, we have stronger evidence for the existence of spirit than we have for that of matter. True, the essence of both is beyond our vision or reach ; it is hidden in impenetrable depths from us ; and our only evidence of the existence of either, is derived from their operations or phenomena. But the phenomena of spirit come more closely and impressively to us, they come under our consciousness. Thought, volition, hope, fear—these are immediate subjects of consciousness, and these belong to the spirit. Indeed, the whole structure of the visible universe indicates the existence of spirit. The universe seems to be produced by and designed for spirit. Matter is essentially inert ; but every part of nature is in motion. Matter is blind ; but every part of nature indicates the most consummate contrivance. Matter is heartless ; but every part of nature is warm and instinct with goodness. The whole system of creation, so far as it comes within my narrow vision, is a reflection of the ideas I attach to spirit. In every part of its wondrous structure “the invisible things,” as from a burnished mirror, are clearly seen. And then too it seems designed *for* spirit. Does not its exquisite contrivance appeal to thought, its warm and ever gushing streams of goodness to gratitude, its enchanting realms of beauty to admiration, its infinite grandeur and sublimity, to reverence and awe ? Indeed, the whole system of visible nature seems to me to imply spirit, and to be incomplete without it. Let landscapes unfold their beauty and oceans roll in grandeur. Let the immeasurable dome above display its radiant worlds by night and its glorious sun by day—all is lifeless without spirit. Without spirit there is no eye for beauty, no heart for goodness, no soul for sublimity and grandeur. What is this fair universe without spirit, but a magnificent mansion without a tenant ; a theatre

disclosing the most enchanting scenes and inspiring plots, without a spectator; a temple filled with the glories of the Shekinah, but containing no worshipper? I infer therefore that wherever there is a streak of beauty, a ray of glory, or a note of music, in whatever orb, however far away, there are spirits to study, adore, and love.

The concurrent impressions also of mankind, sustain the belief. From remotest times, in all places and in every stage of culture, from the lowest point to the highest, men have believed in the spiritual. The philosophy of the sage, as well as the superstition of the savage and the fancy of the poet, has peopled the atmosphere with ghosts. The Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and Jews, as well as the polytheistic world in all times, regarded every section of nature as filled with spirits. The Gods of the heathen were but the forms which man devised to represent his ideas of mysterious spirits that tenanted the earth, ruled the elements, and presided over the destinies of our race. Man cannot shake off faith in spiritual existence. The child believes in it without evidence; and the old man who has passed through a life of scepticism, as in the case of Robert Owen, becomes a firm believer in tales of ghostly exploit. Men see spirits, not only in dim twilight, but in the high noon of civilization. A belief so universal must be intuitive; and any intuitive belief must be true, otherwise there is no truth for man.

The Bible authoritatively declares this fact. It tells us of spirits that are ascending and descending between heaven and earth, that are ever moving the vast and complicated wheels of Providence, and that are always on the wing to execute the behests of their Sovereign. It tells us that there are legions of such existences, that they exist in various orders and states; and that there is One Infinite Spirit, the Parent,

Sustainer, and Judge of all, who is above all, and in all, and through all—God blessed for ever. I am bound to believe, then, that the universe is something more than I can see; something more than can be brought within the cognizance of my five senses; something distinct from the terraqueous globe on which I live, and the huge worlds of flame that roll above me and shed their brightness on my path; something behind all, or rather in all and above all. Ay, the angels, demons, genii, sylphs, and ghosts of which all nations have thought and spoken, are something more than the airy offspring of a superstitious imagination; there are existences answering, in some degree at least, to the notions which humanity has ever attached to such mystic terms. I am not disposed to pronounce all who have stated that they have seen spirits, either fanatics or impostors. The *à priori* wonder is, not that they should be seen, but that they are not more generally perceived. We are related to the material world, and we have senses to discern material existences. We are confessedly more intimately and solemnly related to the spiritual; and is it not natural to expect that we should have a sense to see spiritual things? Were such a sense to be opened within us, as the eye of Elijah's servant was opened of old, what visions would burst upon us! The microscope gives us a new world of wonders; but were God to open the spiritual eye, what a universe of spirits would be revealed!

Secondly: Because the spiritual is more *influential* than the material. The invisible is to the visible what the soul is to the body, that which permeates, animates, works, and directs every part. Its spirit is in all the wheels of the material machine. It is the spring in all its forces, the beauty in all its forms, the glow in all its life.

Thirdly: Because the spiritual is more *lasting* than the material. The material is changeful and transitory.

Analogy suggests, science intimates, the Bible asserts that "the heavens and the earth shall pass away," etc.

If, then, the spiritual is more real, influential, and lasting than the material, is it not more philosophic to have a more practical regard to it than to the material in passing through life? The one moves under the influence of mere appearances, and pursues shadows, and the other walks on in conscious fellowship with the real and the Eternal.

II. It is a more UNPOPULAR course. It is opposed to popular *science*. Popular science teaches that matter is everything—that out of it, as from a great mud egg, all things sprang, by it are supported, and to it must return again. It tells us that all thoughts about the invisible are idle and superstitious; it says, Look to the visible for everything—that secular science is the true Providence of man. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die; ephemeral as we are, let us sport in the sunbeam while we have it, for the night of dark extinction will soon spread over us. It is opposed to popular *religion*. The popular religion, not only of heathendom, but of Christendom, is material; it is the religion of the senses; it is an appeal to the eye, the ear, the taste, the smell. It appeals to the senses, not only by the odour of the incense, the imitations of the cross, the genuflexions of the priest, and the sounds of the choristers, but also by the gross imagery employed in its popular hymns and sermons. All that the popular religionists know of Christ, they know after the flesh; all they feel about Him, are passing sensations. It is opposed, moreover, to popular *life*. The great bulk of mankind live a material life; their ideas of wealth, grandeur, beauty, dignity, pleasure, are all material. Their grand question is, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" They are of the earth earthy; they mind earthly things; they live to

the flesh. Now the course here indicated by Paul, which all Christly souls pursue, is a practical protest against the so-called "positive philosophy" which has become popular in our times. The Christly man, in walking by faith, sets popular science, popular religion, popular life, at defiance. Though he is in the world he is not of the world.

III. It is a more BLESSED course.

First: It is more *safe* to work "by faith" than "by sight." "Appearances often lead astray." The senses are deceptive, the eye especially makes great mistakes. "Things are not what they seem;" nature is not what it seems; men are not what they seem. The eye would have us believe that the heavenly bodies are but lamps of various sizes hung up in the heavens; that the earth beneath our feet is the largest object within our notice, and that it sits like a queen in the midst of the system, serene and motionless, while all the heavenly luminaries, like attendant angels, pass round it, ministering evermore to the requirements of its life and to the brightness and beauty of its forms. In all this the eye deceives; and in a thousand other minor matters it is busy with its delusions. Reason collects evidence, and corrects those mistakes; it weighs the heavenly bodies, and tells their density to a grain; it measures them, and tells their dimensions to an inch; it calculates their velocity with the utmost accuracy. Reason has evidences on which to build a faith of unquestionable truthfulness.

Secondly: It is more *useful* to walk "by faith" than "by sight." Who is the more useful man in society—the man who walks by sight and is controlled in everything by appearances, who is materialistic in all his beliefs, interests, and pursuits; or the man whose mental eye penetrates all phenomena, enters into the invisible region of eternal principles, ascertains the real work they do in the universe, arranges them, and applies them to the uses

of man's daily life? Undoubtedly the latter. To the latter we owe all our inventions, all the blessings and arts that adorn civilized life. Albeit a stupid age calls the former a practical man, and the latter a theorist and a dreamer. The men who in past generations have walked by faith rather than by appearances, are the men to whom the world owes its civilization and its material prosperity. Were all men to walk by "sight," the race would soon sink into the lowest animal barbarism. In the *spiritual* department of life, the man who lives under the practical recognition of One whom no eye has seen or can see, and of an unseen Christ and an invisible universe, is the man who both enjoys for himself and diffuses amongst others the largest amount of happiness. He lives not on the banks of a pool that is always muddy and often dries up, dependent evermore upon atmospheric temperatures, but at the fountain-head, where the streams are crystal, refreshing, and perennial. He stands, not on the fragile bark of mere appearances, heaving evermore on surging and treacherous waves, but on the great rock of realities that remain unaltered and unalterable, the same from age to age.

Thirdly : It is more *ennobling* to walk "by faith" than "by sight." He who walks by sight is bounded by the material. Matter is his cradle, his nourishment, the circle of his activities, and his grave. On the contrary, he who walks by faith, towers into other regions, brighter, broader, and more blest. The man whose faith is bounded by the evidences of his senses, must have but a very narrow world. With the places he has not actually seen, he will have no interest, no connexion. The stupendous systems that roll away in the boundless districts of space, and the mighty principalities of spirits that populate those systems will be nothing to him. Nay, life, which is invisible, mind, which is invisible, God, who is invisible,

will be nothing to him, if he believes only what he sees.

CONCLUSION.—Which of these courses of life are we pursuing? Are we controlled by appearances or principles? Are we walking by faith or by sight? It is not difficult to determine this question for ourselves. Jesus Himself has supplied the test, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit." He that walks by sight is in all his experiences, purposes, and pursuits, *flesh*. Matter is the centre of his being, the scene of his constant action, the fountain of his pleasures, the source of his emotions. His impulses to action are "fleshly lusts," his mind is a "fleshly mind," his wisdom is "fleshly wisdom." He may possess mind of a high order and educational attainments and embellishments of the first class and still, in our Saviour's sense, be only *flesh*. He may be a merchant, artist, author; but the inspiration of his business, the glow of his genius, the tinge and form of his thoughts, will be flesh rather than spirit. Nay, he may be a religionist, and that of the most orthodox stamp; but his creed and devotions will be after the law of a carnal commandment. More than half the religion of Christendom is the religion of flesh. Its inspiration is fleshly feeling, its forms of thought are fleshly, its rules of life are fleshly, its Christ is known only after the flesh. It judges after the flesh, walks after the flesh, wars after the flesh; it is altogether sensuous and gross.

Wherever the body reigns, be it in the halls of science, the councils of cabinets, at the altars of devotion, or in the pulpits of Christianity, the man is flesh, and not spirit. He lives in the realm where nothing but forms are valued and seen—the sensuous realm, bounded above, beneath, and around by matter. His atmosphere is animal feeling, an atmosphere too hazy and thick to transmit the effulgent rays of the spiritual universe. He is flesh. On the

contrary, he who "walks by faith" is *spirit*. Spirit in the sense of *vivacity*. He is not sluggish and dull, but agile and blithe. All his faculties are instinct with a new life—the life of conscience, the true life of man. The eye of intellect is brightened, thought is active, imagination is always on the wing. He is spirit in the sense of *social recognition*. He is not known as other men are known, as men of the world, men who seek fleshly distinctions, fleshly wealth, and fleshly pleasure. But, as a spiritual man, he is known as a man distinguished by spiritual convictions, sympathies, and aims. He is spirit in the sense of *divinity*. He is born of the Divine Spirit, and has a kindredship with, a resemblance to, his Eternal Father. He is a partaker of the Divine nature. His sympathies centre in the Divine, and his life reflects it. He is now a conscious citizen of the great spiritual kingdom. While here, he makes matter, in all its combinations and forms, his absolute subject and efficient servant, the means of spiritual growth, and the agent of his communion and intercourse with the spiritual and Divine.

TO-MORROW.—For some time had the Emperor Francis,—Maria Theresa's Consort,—been threatened with apoplexy, when, on the morning of 18th August, 1764, being pressed by his sister to be blooded, he answered, "I am engaged to sup with Joseph this evening, and will not disappoint him; but I promise you I will be blooded to-morrow." At the opera in the evening he was taken ill. Retiring, he was struck with apoplexy, and died at Joseph's feet, for he had fallen from Joseph's arms. At his feet—like one of olden time—he bowed, he fell, he lay down; where he bowed, there he fell down dead.—*Jacox*.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this TEHELIM, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) ANNOTATIONS of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is among the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavor so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: An Old Sermon on a Subject ever New.

“Hear this, all ye people,” etc.—PSALM xlix. 1-20.

HISTORY.—*To the chief Musician, a Psalm for the sons of Korah.* This is the title of the psalm; we have had it several times before, and it has been elsewhere explained. This title is consistent with any date from the time of David to that of Ezra. As the subject is an old and universal one, and the psalm has no particular references or very marked features of style, we are left in doubt concerning both its occasion and authorship.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1, 2.—“*Hear this, all ye people: give ear all ye inhabitants of the world: both high and low, rich and poor, together.*” The writer addresses himself to universal man, to man in all ages, all lands, and all conditions of life, “high and low, rich and poor.” As the subject has no mere local or temporary interest, it is for the ear of the race in all countries, conditions, and centuries.

Ver. 3.—“*My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.*” If the author here speaks of himself, he speaks with reprehensible egotism; but if he speaks as the conscious organ of inspiration, he speaks with propriety and force. He who speaks as a heaven-inspired messenger, speaks evermore wisely and well. He speaks wisdom, and the meditation of his heart is understanding. His utterances are not crude and impulsive, but the result of holy meditation.

Ver. 4.—“ *I will incline mine ear.*” This expression implies that his sentiments were not self-derived, not intuitional; they came to him from without; he listened to divine voices, and he heard them. “ *To a parable.*” Literally, likeness or comparison, then any figurative topical expression. The parallel word here means an enigma, something hard to be understood. “ *I will open my dark saying upon the harp.*” My enigma, I will give the solution of the problem in music. I will give my explanation, not only in a jubilant spirit, but in such forms of expression as shall fit them for instrumental music.

Ver. 5.—“ *Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?*” “Why should I fear in the days of evil (when) the iniquity of my oppressors (or supplanters) shall surround me?” The theme of the whole psalm is the negative proposition involved in this interrogation: viz., that the righteous has no cause to fear, even when surrounded by powerful and spiteful enemies. “‘Days of evil,’ i.e. of misfortune or distress. The word translated oppressors, commonly means heels; but as this yields not good sense here, it may be taken as a verbal noun, meaning either treaders, trampers, oppressors, or supplanters, traitors in a sense akin to which the verbal root is used, Gen. xxvii. 35; Hos. xii. 4. In either case it is clearly a description of his enemies as practising violence or fraud against him.”—*Alexander*. This verse contains the thesis of the whole psalm, which amounts to this,—*the godly have no good reason for dreading adversities or foes.*

Ver. 6.—“ *They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.*” If the word “that” were taken out, the sense of the writer would appear much more clear. He seems to say, they, i.e. his supplanters, his treacherous foes referred to in the previous verse, boast themselves of their riches, and trust in their wealth.

Ver. 7.—“ *None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*” “A man is not able by any means to redeem his brother.”—*Delitzsch*. “A brother in riches and ungodliness (Gen. xlix. 5). In the Hebrew order, ‘A brother can no one redeeming redeem.’ The double expression redeeming redeem emphasizes the idea of redemption as the chief concern, the standard of value by which all things, wealth included, are to be tested, whether they who have them ought to boast over those who have not, or the latter fear the former on account of them.”—*Fausset*.

Ver. 8.—“ *For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*” The word “soul” here does not mean merely the spiritual part of human nature, but human life. The idea seems to be, that human life is too costly a thing for any money to procure its continuance; it ceases for ever, that is, whatever money you spend to perpetuate it, the expenditure is useless. *Delitzsch*’s translation hits off

the idea, "Too costly is the redemption of their soul, they must give it up forever."

Ver. 9.—"*That he should still live forever, and not see corruption.*"

The same idea is here carried out and more fully expressed. Turn the round earth into gold and diamonds, and the whole would be insufficient to deliver one life from the grave.

Ver. 10.—"*For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.*" The allusion is to the rich; and it means, that whether they are wise or foolish and brutish, their wealth, however enormous, cannot prevent them from going down to the grave.

Ver. 11.—"*Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names.*" The idea of the verse is clear enough, it is this,—that those rich fools live and act upon the thought that their earthly prosperity is to be perpetual.

Ver. 12.—"*Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish.*" Nevertheless it matters not what the amount of wealth or fame man attains, he must die and pass away—die like the beasts that perish.

Ver. 13.—"*This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.*" This is their course; such is their folly; and yet after them men will delight in what they say. Their way or course means not only their behaviour, but their fate or destiny."—*Alexander*. Notwithstanding the folly of those fools who imagine they can give permanency to their life and their fame, others succeed them who pursue the same infatuated course. *Selah*, ponder this.

Ver. 14.—"*Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them.*" "Like dumb driven cattle" they go down to the grave and rot, thus lose all their worldly beauty, grandeur, and also their magnificent dwelling. Thus it is night with them, black, starless, hopeless night. "*The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*" Is there a reference here to the resurrection morning? We know not. The general idea however is, that whilst the wicked, however wealthy, will go down into darkness, the upright, however poor, will ascend into light. There is a destined change in their relative position.

Ver. 15.—"*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me. Selah.*" Perhaps the writer means this: Although no wealth can deliver a wicked man from the power of the grave, God can do it, and will do it for me. "Elohim will deliver my soul from Hades, for He will take me up." *Delitzsch*. *Selah*, ponder this. Here is sublime confidence in God under trial.

Ver. 16.—"*Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased.*" "Here begins the application or practical conclusion of the foregoing meditation. It is marked by a change of form, the Psalmist is now no longer speaking of himself, but to himself

or to another, as the person most directly interested in his subject. See a similar transition in Psalm xxxii. 8, and compare the parental or authoritative tone of the address with that in Psalm xxxiv. 11." *Alexander*. The idea is, Dread not the power which any man can wield on account of his wealth, for the simple reason stated in the next verse.

Ver. 17.—"*For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him.*" Wealth gives man an enormous power for evil, but when he dies it is gone: he leaves all behind him. His glory, that is, all the brilliant concomitants of wealth, he leaves behind, they do not descend after him.

Ver. 18.—"*Though while he lived he blessed his soul; and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*" The ungodly rich man here blessed his soul, regarded his life as pre-eminently happy; his contemporaries thought more of him because of his good fortune, "men will praise thee when thou doest good to thyself." How true this! Men worship success.

Ver. 19.—"*He shall go to the generation of his fathers.*" To be gathered to one's own people, "his fathers," is a common expression in the Old Testament to symbolize death (Gen. xxx. 18; xxxv. 29; xlix. 29; Num. xx. 24-26; xxvii. 13; xxxi. 2; Deut. xxxii. 50; Judges ii. 10). Death unites all in the embrace of the old mother earth. *They shall never see light.*" Never any more see the light of this world or walk among the living.

Ver. 20.—"*Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.*" The idea here is, that the man, in all the glory of his wealth, who has no spiritual intelligence, that is, "understandeth not" the great realities of being as he ought to understand them, is "like the beasts that perish." The writer of this psalm, when thus describing the end of the wicked as similar to that of the beast, therein implies that the righteous will have a different destiny.

ARGUMENT.—This psalm consists of a short introductory stanza, inviting general attention to the subjects, verses 1-4, followed by two longer stanzas, the close of which is marked by the recurrence of a burden or refrain, ver. 12 and 20. In the first of these two divisions the prominent idea is the fallacy of all merely secular advantages and hopes, ver. 5-12. In the other, these advantages and hopes are directly contrasted with those of the believer, verses 13-20.

(To be continued.)

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but, our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: A Blessed Consciousness, a Sublime Reflection, and a Moral Sadness.

“My foot hath held His steps,” etc.—Job, xxiii. 11–17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 11.—“*My foot hath held His steps.*” The law is, in the Old Testament poetry, regarded as a “way” in which God proceeds as a guide. Hence when Job said he had “held His steps,” he means that he had trod in the footsteps of his guide. He means I have obeyed all His precepts. “*His way have I kept and not declined.*” The same idea more fully expressed. He means, I have persevered in obedience. This he more fully expresses in the next verse.

Ver. 12.—“*Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips.*” My obedience was not occasional, but constant. “*I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.*” “‘Esteemed’ rather laid up; viz., as a treasure found (Matt. xiii. 44; Ps. cxix. 11), alluding to the words of Eliphaz (ch. xxii. 22). There was no need to tell me so; I have done so already (Jer. xv. 16). ‘Necessary’ the appointed portion of food, as in Prov. xxx. 8. Umbreit and Maurer translate, ‘More than my law; my own will, in antithesis to the words of His mouth’ (John vi. 38). How difficult it is for a man to prefer God’s laws to those of his own will. Probably under the general term ‘what is appointed to be’ (the same Hebrew is in ver. 14), all that ministers to the appetites of the body and carnal will is included.”—Faussett.

Ver. 13.—“*But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.*” “Yet He remaineth by one thing, and who can turn Him? and He accomplisheth what His soul desireth.”—Delitzsch. The idea is, He has a purpose, and that purpose is unchangeable.

Ver. 14.—“*For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him.*” “Surely He will complete what He

has decreed for me." Many such afflictions He has purposed for me, and nothing can change that purpose.

Ver. 15.—"*Therefore am I troubled at His presence: when I consider, I am afraid of Him.*" The thought that He has determined to afflict me and His determination can not be altered, fills me with apprehension, "I am afraid of Him."

Ver. 16.—"*For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.*" "But it is God Himself who hath made my heart faint, yea the Almighty it is who hath confounded me. He it is who, by sending on me calamity after calamity, every one more grievous than the last—by depriving me, first of my property, then of my children, and finally of my health—has made me so faint-hearted as to dread even greater evils than those I have already seen."—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 17.—"*Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath He covered the darkness from my face.*" This clause seems to express Job's regret that he had not been cut off, taken away from the world, before these dire calamities fell on him.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically these words present three subjects for thought,—a *blessed consciousness*, a *sublime reflection*, and a *moral sadness*. Here we have—

I. A BLESSED CONSCIOUSNESS. Job expressed a consciousness of two things.

First: *Obedience to God's precepts.* He felt his obedience to have been *unswerving*. "My foot hath held His steps." He had not only pursued the path of duty, but he had never turned aside. Every step he gave was in the footprints of his Guide. And not only was he conscious of his obedience being unswerving, but also *persevering*. "His way have I kept, and not declined; neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips." He did not pause or retrograde, he pursued the path of obedience with all the regularity of life.

Secondly: *Appreciation of God's truth.* "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." What is more precious to man than his "necessary food"? It is the means of his subsistence, it is his life. But to a devout soul God's words are esteemed of greater value, "sweeter are they than honey and the honeycomb." But if instead of the word "food" we substitute "purpose" or "determination" (as some translators do), it may be asked, What is more precious to a man than his own leading determination or purpose? It is the spring of all his activities, his spiritual

life. But God's truth Job felt to be more precious even than this. What so valuable as God's word !

Such is the consciousness which Job here declares. If it was well founded (as we have reason to believe it was, for the Almighty Himself said he was an "upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil"), then what a blessed man was he ! blessed despite of all the terrible calamities that befell him. Whatever anguish he experienced from the pangs of bereavement, the deprivations of adversity, the tortures of physical pain, he could experience no moral remorse while he possessed the smiles and succour of a good conscience towards God and man. One replied to unjust accusations thus, "I will rest henceforward in peace, in the house of my own conscience ; and if I do any good deeds, it is no matter who knows them ; if bad, knowing them myself, it is no matter from whom I hide them : they will be recorded before that Judge from whose presence I cannot flee. If all the world applaud me and He accuse me, their praise is in vain." Here we have—

II. A SUBLIME REFLECTION. "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him ?" etc. The subject of the patriarch's reflection was the *purpose* of God. The great Maker and Master of the universe has a purpose. He does not act by necessity or caprice, but by an intelligent purpose. The patriarch seems to have had three ideas concerning this purpose.

First : It is *unalterable*. "He is in one mind." Why does He not change his purpose ? Not because He is not *free*, but because His purpose is so perfect as to admit of no possible improvement. Man changes his purpose because he discovers it is impracticable, or otherwise defective. The purpose of God is absolutely perfect. The unalterableness of the Divine purpose is a theme for the most exultant thought. Any change in His purpose would be to the detriment of the universe.

"Who would have Thee change, O Lord ?
For kinder never couldst Thou be ;
Thy love is one great golden cord,
Binding the universe to Thee."

Another idea the patriarch seems to have concerning this purpose is—

Secondly : It is *efficient*. “What His soul desireth, even that He doeth.” His purpose is not an abstract thought, but an ever operative force. It is the spring of all the forces and movements of the universe. What God decrees He does. No combination of creature force can frustrate the Divine plan. “What His soul desireth, even that he doeth.” Another idea the patriarch seems to have concerning this purpose is—

Thirdly : It is *personal*. “For He performeth the thing that is appointed for *me*: and many such things are with Him.” “Appointed for *me*.” He has a purpose, not only in relation to the universe as a whole, but to every part of the whole ; not only to communities, but to individuals. “*Me*.” Wonderful is the thought that God has a purpose concerning my little life, conduct, and destiny.

Is not this a sublime subject for reflection ; this unalterableness, efficiency, and speciality of the Divine purpose ? Here we have—

III. A MORAL SADNESS. “Therefore am I troubled at His presence,” etc. The effect of Job’s reflections upon God was of a painful character. There seems to have come to him—

First : The feeling of *awe*. “I am afraid of Him.” Not the fear of terror, but of profound veneration.

Secondly : The feeling of *weakness*. “God maketh my heart soft.” He taketh away my strength. When a man thinketh on the greatness of God, what a sense of weakness comes over him ! “When I consider the heavens,” etc.

Thirdly : The feeling of *abnegation*. “Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath He covered the darkness from my face.” He would have been contented to have been swept away from the land of the living. He felt his life to be utterly worthless. When the soul has one glimpse of the majesty of God, how profoundly it feels its own utter insignificance ! He loses all egotism ; the *I* is engulfed in the Infinite.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are :—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard ; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee ; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner ; Lange ; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ as a Religious Teacher.

"Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came unto Him ; and He sat down and taught them."—JOHN viii. 1, 2.

EXPOSITION.—Concerning the genuineness of these and the following ten verses of this chapter, which is questioned by some and denied by others, we shall offer remarks in our next section. Meanwhile we shall confine our attention to these two verses.

Ver. 1.—"*Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*" This ought to have been at the conclusion of the preceding chapter, following the words, "every man went unto his own house." Whilst the people had perhaps all their own houses to go to, and to them they retired, Jesus had no home, but retired to the "mount of Olives." "This spot is a high hill rising quite abruptly from the valley of Jehoshaphat, and overlooking Jerusalem on the east side. At its foot between the city and the hill, is the brook Kedron ; and on its slope, just across the brook, is the garden of Gethsemane. A winding footpath leads over the hill to Bethany on the other side. Our Lord seems to have passed the night on the Mount, perhaps at Bethany, where He was wont to resort, away from the bustle and turmoil of the crowded city, and from the malice of His enemies." From Luke xxi. 37 we learn that He was in the habit of spending the night on the mount of Olives during His last residence at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2.—"*And early in the morning.*" Ἐθρρον. "John writes elsewhere, πρωια (xviii. 28) ; πρωι (xx. 1) ; πρωιας (xxi. 4). Luke, on the contrary, ἔθρρον. It is to be observed here, however, that the term ἔθρρον denotes more precisely the dawn of morning, and that it is intended to denote just this time."—Lange. "*He came again into the temple,*

and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them.' Though He had been persecuted in the temple, as we find in the twenty-fifth verse of the preceding chapter, with undaunted courage, He resorts thither again in order to teach the people.

HOMILETICS.—The two verses suggest to us a few thoughts concerning Christ as a religious Teacher.

I. He was DEVOUTLY STUDIOUS. It was from the solitudes of the Mount of Olives, where he had spent the previous night, that He goes to the temple to preach. Christ often had recourse to the loneliness of the hills for holy meditation and communion with the Eternal. There, in those profound silences where alone the voices of truth are heard, He poured out His thoughts upon the loftiest themes, and opened His heart to the influences of His great Father's loving mind. Devout solitude is the scene where the best preparation for public speaking can be attained. Without this, theological halls and elocutionary schools are worse than useless. It is only in solitude that a man can break the shells and reach the germs of the higher truths of life and destiny; and there only, by bathing them in the living current of devotion, can He make them so real to Himself as to make them realities to others. There are three things, as we have elsewhere said, that seem essential in order properly to preach the Gospel, and these can come only by seasons of devout solitude.

First: *Self-formed conviction of Gospel truth.* Gospel truth is our great instrument of social usefulness; that without which nothing else will be of any service. It is the "power of God unto salvation." But how is this to be wielded—by circulating copies of the Scripture, or by a mere recitation of their contents, or by repeating what other people have said and written concerning those truths? All these may be and are useful in their way. But there is one thing indispensable, even to do these things effectively, and that is, self-formed convictions. Heaven has so far honoured our nature, that the Gospel, in order to obtain its grand victories, must pass as living beliefs through the soul of him that employs it. If we would effectually use the Gospel to help society, we must see, taste, and handle it with our own souls. The men who speak

the Gospel without such convictions,—and there are thousands of such amongst conventional preachers,—can never enrich the world. They are echoes of old voices ; what they say was in the world before they came into it. They are but mere channels through which old dogmas flow. But he who speaks what he believes and because he believes, speaks in some sense a new thing to the race. The doctrine comes from him instinct and warm with life. His individuality is impressed upon it. The world never had it in that exact form before, and never would have had it so had he not believed and spoken. Now, devout solitude is necessary to turn the Gospel that is in the Bible into this power of living conviction ; you can never get it elsewhere. Alone with God, you can search the Gospel to its foundation, and feel the congruity of its doctrines with your reason, its claims with your conscience, its provisions with your wants.

Secondly : *Unconquerable love for Gospel truth.* There is an immense practical opposition to Gospel truth in society. Men's pride, prejudice, pleasures, pursuits, and temporal interests are now, as ever, against it. It follows, therefore, that those who think more of the favour and applause of society than of the claims of truth, will not deal with it honestly, earnestly, and therefore successfully. The man only who loves truth more than popularity, fortune, or even life, can so use it as really and everlastingly to benefit mankind. In devout solitude you can cultivate this invincible attachment to truth, and you may be made to feel with Paul, who said—"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ."

Thirdly : *A living expression of Gospel truth.* We must be "living epistles." Our conduct must confirm and illumine the doctrines which our lips declare. Gospel sermons which are the expressions of life, are life-giving. Gospel truth must be embodied ; the word must become flesh ; it must be drawn out in living characters in all the phases of our every-day existence ; its spirit must be our inspiration, if we would make it instrumental for good. Now, for the production of such sermons, I am convinced there must be seasons of devout solitude ;

hours when, under the silent sunbeams of eternity, ideas run into emotions, circulate as a vital current through every vein of the soul, and form the very stamina of our being. It is said of Moses, "that the skin of his face shone while he talked with God." But in seasons of devout solitude our whole nature may grow luminous, and every phase of our character coruscate with the deep things of the Spirit. John the Baptist gained his invincible energy in the lonely wilderness; Paul prepared to be an apostle in the quiet of Arabia; and it was in the awful midnight solitude of Gethsemane that an angel from heaven came to strengthen Jesus for his work. It is beneath the earth's green mantle, in secret and silence amongst the roots, that the trees of the forest turn the elements of nature to their own advantage. And it is down in the quiet depths of spiritual realities, alone with God, that the soul only can turn this world to its use.

II. He was as a teacher SUBLIMELY COURAGEOUS. "He came again unto the temple." In that temple during the previous days, His life had been threatened. It is said that "they sought to take him" (chap. vii. 30), that is to kill Him. Officers had been despatched on the previous day from the Sanhedrim in order to seize Him. Yet, notwithstanding this malignant determination to destroy Him, with a noble daring he goes "early in the morning" of the next day "into the temple." You must distinguish this spirit of fearless daring from that which the world calls courage.

First: Brute courage is *dead to the sacredness of life*. The great bulk of the armies of Europe are formed of men who have gone into the profession (as it is called) without any deep conviction as to the sacredness of human life. They are men, for the most part, who hold life cheaply. Their courage is an animal and a mercenary thing. This was not the courage that Christ possessed and displayed. Deeply did He feel, and frequently did He teach, the sanctity of life. He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. "What," said He, "shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his life; and what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

Secondly : Brute courage is *indifferent to the grand mission* of life. The man of brute valour is not penetrated, still less inspired, with the question, What is the grand object of my life ? Wherefore was I sent into the world ? Am I here to work out the great designs of my Maker, and to rise into angelhood, or to be a mere fighting machine ? On the contrary, Christ's regard for the grand mission of His life made Him courageous. He held the will of His Father as a dearer thing to Him than His mortal existence. He came to bear witness to the truth ; and to fulfil this work He dared the fury of His enemies, and willingly risked His own mortal life.

Thirdly : Brute courage is always *inspired by mere animal passion*. It is when the blood is up the man is daring. And the blood, what is it ? The mere blood of the enraged tiger or the infuriated lion ? When the blood cools down, the man's courage, such as it is, collapses. Not so with the valour of Christ. His courage was that of deep conviction of duty. His excitement was not animal, but spiritual—not malign or ambitious, but reverent and benign. “As Luther,” Dr. D'Aubigné informs us, “drew near the door which was about to admit him into the presence of his judges (the Diet of Worms), he met a valiant knight, the celebrated George of Freundsberg, who, four years later, at the head of his German lansquenets, bent the knee with his soldiers on the field of Pavia, and then, charging to the left of the French army, drove it into the Ticino, and in a great measure decided the captivity of the King of France. The old general, seeing Luther pass, tapped him on the shoulder, and shaking his head, blanched in many battles, said kindly, ‘Poor monk, poor monk ! thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captain have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee.’ A noble tribute of respect paid by the courage of the sword to the courage of the mind.”

Nothing is more necessary for a religious teacher than courage, for his mission is to strike hard against the prejudices,

the self-interests, the dishonesties, the cherished passions and sinful pursuits of the masses. No man without an invincible valour of soul can do the work of a religious teacher in this age. The popular preacher must, more or less, be cowardly conciliatory. The less force of conviction a preacher has, the more he is fitted for popularity. Dead fish flow with the stream; it requires living ones with much inner force to cut up against the current.

III. As a Teacher He was EARNESTLY DILIGENT. "Early in the morning." Elsewhere we are informed that He rose up "a great while before day." He did not indulge Himself in sleep. When sleep, which generally does its refreshing work in a few hours, had left Him, and the sun struck his rays upon the horizon, He was up at His great work. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is called day, for the night cometh in which no man can work." * Two things should make a teacher earnestly diligent,—

First : *The transcendent importance of his mission.* What has he to do? To enlighten and regenerate imperishable spirits that are in a morally ruinous condition. What is involved in the loss of one soul? Secondly : *The brevity of his life.* How short the time, even in the longest lived men, for the prosecution of this the greatest of all human undertakings! Oh that all preachers of the Holy Word were inspired with something of the earnestness of Christ's spirit! Then indeed they would be earnest in season and out of season, etc. No time would be wasted in sleep, in self-indulgence, or even in occupations that had not a salutary bearing on the great mission.

'Oh! let all the soul within you
For the truth's sake go abroad.
Strike! let every nerve and sinew
Tell on ages—tell for God."

IV. As a Teacher He was BEAUTIFULLY NATURAL. "He sat down and taught them." There is nothing stiff or official

* See a reading on early rising, "The Practical Philosopher," p. 458.

in Christ's manner of teaching. All was free, fresh, and elastic as nature. (1) He was natural in *attitude*. Modern rhetoric has rules to guide a public speaker as to his posture, how he should move his hand, point his finger, and roll his eyes. All such miserable directions are not only to the utmost degree unlike Christ, but degrading to the moral nature of the speaker, and detrimental to his oratoric influence. Let a man be charged with great thoughts, and those thoughts will throw his frame into the most becoming attitudes. (2) He was natural in *expression*. He attended to no classic rule of composition ; the words and similes He employed were such as His thoughts ran into at first, and such as His hearers could well understand. To many modern preachers composition is everything. Words the most select and ornate, sentences the most polished and periods the most rounded, paragraphs the most finished and brilliant, they scrupulously regard. How unlike Christ ! and what solemn trifling with Gospel truth ! (3) He was natural in *tones*. The tones of His voice, we may rest assured, rose and fell according to the thoughts that occupied His soul. The voice of the modern teacher is often hideously artificial. Just so far as a speaker goes away from his nature, either in language, attitude, or tone, he loses self-respect, inward vigour, and social force. Ever should he be—

“Simple, grave, sincere ;
 In doctrine uncorrupt ; in language plain,
 And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,
 And natural in gesture ; much impressed
 Himself, as conscious of his awful charge
 And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
 May feel it too. Affectionate in look
 And tender in address, as well becomes
 A messenger of grace to guilty men.”

Germ of Thought.

Subject: Christian Life a Growth.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 PET. iii. 18.

THESE are wise concluding words with which to close a Christian letter; they bring men to the Author of spiritual life, and they reveal the means by which it is to be nurtured. What is it to “grow in grace”? The question presses for an answer now, when abounding religiousness appears to teach that the people are simply to believe in a few commonplaces of Christianity, and float constantly in a calm atmosphere of changeless joy. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” wrote a man into whose quivering flesh the hand of his Redeemer had purposely inserted a “thorn,” that he might not lose his sense of kinship with suffering men. The life-long pain which he was destined to endure, was sent to tone down the raptures of the revelation made to him, and thereby,—strange as it may appear,—help to keep him in a state of grace! The “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” of which Paul reminds the Corinthians, was, *the spirit of self-denyng beneficence*, which led Him to “empty Himself of all but love,” which directed the outflow of His compassion into innumerable rills, which everywhere carried life and irrigated spiritual wastes.

I. The heart must become rooted in living, Christ-like principles before it can “grow in grace.” The truth must find the living nerve of a man’s spirit, as the knife of the gardener *slips* the *shoot*, that it may *strike* when put into the soil. The living twig will grow, while the most sightly *stick* will rot. The untouched and unrepentant never can find the Saviour *from* sin, never graft upon Him by faith.

II. The Christian religion is to be cultivated. It is a scheme of hope and restoration, a “spirit of love and of a sound mind,” in which men are to grow. Like true dignity, it

is the outcome of continued and costly training ; not like jewellery, which is put on, and may be worn by the most vulgar. The task set us, if we have become “rooted in Christ,” is to grow ourselves in God-likeness—in all goodness and in richness of nature—a work which ought to satisfy the most ambitious craving. Many Christians appear to be satisfied with much less. Like the limpet glued to its parent rock, though washed by the floods of plenty, it sticks there an insensate shell. As helps and privileges are given, it is expected to become stronger, more clear and mellow.

III. Due attention must be given to the law of spiritual development. Soils and circumstances differ, and the very best requires careful cultivation. Some are so poor and cold that, unless well drained and heated, they will produce nothing profitable. It is a man’s supreme concern to see to it that he is steadily growing more Christ-like in thought and feeling ; that he is transmuting, by the power of an inward life, the influences which touch him into holy nutriment and strength. To do this, some natures require the utmost vigilance and even the most unsparing pruning. Mere religious fastidiousness will not do ; it may turn the surface, but cannot vitalize the root. Frail natures like ours possess a marvellous power. By yielding to lower instincts, we may wriggle as the grub, and change the most splendid opportunities into ministers of vengeance. A Nebuchadnezzar becomes a beast, and a Judas a devil.

IV. The law of growth works its purpose through changing seasons. The unfriendly winter of our trials is sent to serve a blessed purpose. Raked together in the end of his field and burned, we may see what the farmer does with his weeds, and God lights His fires that the peaceable fruits of righteousness may grow unhindered. To our faith in Christ we are to add the courage which works in a line with the Holy Spirit, as He leads us to cultivate nobleness of character. God helps us that we may help ourselves. “I will be as the dew unto Israel, and he shall grow as the lily.” The silent heaven-influence gently falls upon the place beneath, and fruits and

flowers grow. Joseph's fortune was not the sudden, gourd-growth of a night ; the principles of virtue which struck root in early life at home lived through, and perhaps needed, the wintering process of the dungeon, before they could properly unfold. It is possible to turn our very hindrances into helps.

V. The growing life will manifest itself. An increase of the spirit of reverent obedience and of inward power must belong to the heart whose emptiness has been filled by the satisfying spirit of Christ. The selfish cry, Give me, give me, is exchanged for the invitation of beneficence. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye." The empty pitcher is now full, and still filling, and it runs over as a little fountain of blessing. It knows the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ; it has been learning of Christ, digging into His thoughts, and is enlarged and growingly fruitful. *Humility* increases ; as the plant roots downward, so grace deepens. *Conscience* becomes more true to Christ ; it points to purity. As the ship's safety depends upon the needle's sensitivity, so does our growth upon a healthy conscience. *Love to God and man* increases, not only the glow of emotion, but the practical expression of it in the obedience of life. An enlightened Christian charity outgrows prejudice and party. Can Christ, who is "Immanuel God with us," dwell in any high sense, in the heart which is not increasing in sympathy with Him ? Can Christianity do any mighty works amongst us if we remain undeveloped Christians. He who commands suns and give seasons withholds no good thing from those that walk uprightly.

Leeds.

W. CURRIE.

SERMONIC NOTES ON THE VISIONS OF EZEKIEL.

No. XX.

Subject: The River of Life, an Emblem of Living Christianity.

"Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house ; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward : for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under from the right side of the house, at the

south side of the altar. Then brought he me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the outer gate by the way that looketh eastward ; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters ; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters ; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through ; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand ; and it was a river that I could not pass over : for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over. And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen this ? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea : which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live : and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither : for they shall be healed ; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto En-eglain ; they shall be a place to spread forth nets ; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed ; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed : it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary : and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.”—EZEKIEL xlvii. 1-12.

HAVING regarded the gigantic and complete Temple described in the preceding chapters, as a symbol of the Kingdom of God, we now have to enquire what that strong, deep, life-giving, and health-restoring river is, which at first only trickles forth as a streamlet from under that Temple porch ? In our study of this part of the vision, we may agree with many who have accepted a more literal interpretation of the Temple itself than we have. For surely none can insist that an actual stream of water is here intended. It has been wisely shown by Dr. Fairbairn, “ that a natural river like this would of necessity be in contravention of the established laws of nature, and could only exist as a perpetual

miracle. Supposing that by some new adjustment of the land a stream might be made to rise upon Mount Zion, yet a stream feeding itself as described in the vision, and growing with such rapid strides is utterly at variance with the known laws of the material world. For it is to be observed that the increase here comes from no extraneous and incidental sources; it is all along the temple waters that form the river, and at last empty themselves into the sea, and yet from being at first but a small streamlet, these grow by self production in the space of little more than a mile into an unfordable river!" So that we are led to look for some other than a merely material influence proceeding from the Kingdom of God to bless those that are without. From the restored Temple rich blessing rolls forth to the outer world. Probably the vision of such higher influence as here predicted was to some extent fulfilled through the renewed national and religious prosperity that soon came to Israel; it was more largely fulfilled by the Advent of Christ and the sending forth of His Apostles, and will be completely fulfilled when His influence has blessed all mankind. Little more needs to be said about the primary meaning of the vision than is contained in a sentence of Dean Stanley: "How the outward form of that vision was left to pass away, how its inward spirit was fulfilled beyond all that Ezekiel could have dreamed, is the story reserved for the next epoch of the Jewish history, but is yet not dimly foreshadowed even in Ezekiel's own lifetime." Nor can we better approach the *universal and perpetual meaning* of this vision than under the guidance of one of the most suggestive of modern preachers, as he says, "And so the prophet continued to gaze in divine, sacred trance as the purpose of God unfolded itself. Time and space vanished out of his sight. He was blest with a vision of the future growing brighter, purer, and happier through the grace of God. He saw the divine idea manifesting itself anew in human nature, taking possession of the heart and life of the race, and acquiring over it an ever increasing power. Or, if he did not,—if the meaning of this

vision was partly hidden from himself,—if he ‘searched and inquired diligently’ what the Spirit of Christ which was in him could signify by a prophecy at once so mysterious and so glorious—it should move us to the deeper thankfulness to-day, that we are able to attach a meaning more precise probably in some respects than even the prophet himself could have assigned to that promise which is the sum and crown of the whole—which is not a mere metaphor or glancing similitude, but a most just and fruitful analogy, as true from first to last in the world of the soul as it is in the world of the senses—‘Everything shall live whither the river cometh.’” Now this life-giving and ever increasing stream of sacred influence proceeding from the very centre of the Kingdom of God, is surely “*Living Christianity*.” Not merely Christianity as a compendium of historic facts, or a system of religious creed, but Christianity in practice ; the Christly life quickened in every man, woman, and child that possesses it by the Spirit of God, and so existing in every such person as to diffuse its life-giving restorative in the vast human world.

“O sacred stream of love,
Hast thou begun thy flow,
And from the hills above
Reached now the lands below ?
Then, blessed by Thee, life’s common field
Will corn and fruit and herbage yield.”

The visional river illustrates for us concerning Living Christianity,—

I. ITS ORIGIN. The “waters issued from near the threshold of the house.” The fountain, then, is in the holy place, the holy of holies. Ezekiel cannot completely trace it thither, for the entrance to the holy of holies is only allowed to the high priest. Joel and Zechariah agree with Ezekiel in declaring that this river of blessing issues from the sanctuary, John the Beloved is able to show us its very fountain-head, for he points to it as “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” By this we are reminded that Christianity, as a system of truth, is not a human invention, but a divine

revelation. In it God has "bowed the Heavens and come down." But we are also reminded that Christianity, as a life in separate human lives, as a saving power for the individual and for the race, is also divinely given. Wherever there is Christly life, whether it be only the clear fresh streamlet in the child's heart, or the deep full tide in the heart of saint, apostle, or martyr, it has "issued from under the threshold of the house," it has "proceeded from the throne." Every such one is "born of God;" every such one utters with thanksgiving the adoration, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

II. ITS INCREASE. "Son of Man, hast thou seen it?" was the question put to the prophet by him who had the measuring line, and who, taking him beyond the temple grounds, had shown him the rapid deepening and widening of this mystic river—a deepening and widening by which the streamlet that had not been up to his ankles, became a river that could not be passed over. This progress of Christianity is *true of the race*. What figure could more beautifully declare that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem?" The knowledge of the Lord is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Beginning in a rill, and widening and deepening to a river, beginning as a mustard-seed and growing to a great tree, beginning as a little leaven that ferments the whole lump, Christianity, at first seen in the Babe in a manger, shall govern thrones and mould empires and redeem humanity. This progress of Christianity is *true of the individual*. Its wonderful power at first works in secret in the soul; there are a few holy thoughts, a few heavenward aspirations. But he who follows on to know the Lord has insight into deeper mysteries, and realizes rich experiences. Till at length, as before a river that he could not pass, he cries, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Unless there are signs of this progress in our experience, we may well question we have the water of life Christ has promised shall be in us.

III. ITS EFFECTS. There are two closely connected and yet

not identical attributes in this visional river that symbolize the influence of a living Christianity. (1) There is *vivifying power*. "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." There is prolific, exuberant life suggested here. For on one side and on the other are very many trees, and those not poor sickly striplings, but trees for food whose leaf shall not fade, whose fruit shall not fail; that shall bring forth fruit every month, fruit that shall be for food, while the very leaves are for healing. And then in the waters themselves there are vast shoals of fish—fish so abundant and so varied that though the fishermen have already taken great hauls, they throng the banks with their nets spread in preparation for new work and new successes. Those trees, in their perpetual fruitfulness, stand as symbols of godly men, who are "planted by these rivers of water." Those fish, in their vast number and variety, are symbols of the men whom the messengers of Christ as "fishers of men," bring to the knowledge of His Gospel. And the prolific life is a symbol of the mental, the social, the spiritual life all may have who accept the teaching, receive the love of Him who says, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly." (2) There is *restorative power*. The water of the river flows into the Dead Sea, and so heals its waves that fish can live there that were about to perish. What the vision teaches this river can do for that Dead Sea, what the tree cast into the waters of Marah did in sweetening them, living Christianity accomplishes in the world. The world lying in wickedness is a Dead Sea, a Marah. Its corruption, its bitterness, shall yield, have yielded, to the pure, loving, hopeful, prayerful influence of Christly lives.

IV. ITS ABSENCE. As we read "the miry places and the marishes thereof that shall not be healed, they shall be given to salt," we are reminded of the *natural* fact that the height of water of a sea is different at different times, and that if the water subsides, salt morasses and marshes rise here and there that are cut off from connection with the main sea, and become first pestilential and loathsome, then dry and barren.

And by this natural fact we are warned of the *spiritual* fact, that where the waters of a living Christianity do not come there will be no life, no healing; and that sooner or later there will be the loathsome mire, the pestilential marsh, and the salt and deadly morass. "He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life." So was it with Capernaum, with Jerusalem; so will it be with every individual to whom Christ, the Fountain of Living Waters, has to say, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." The explanation of every such human mire, morass, marsh, is, "Ye would not." The punishment and the ruin consists in being left to themselves, in cutting themselves off from the river of life whose waters quicken and heal, and spread all through the nations and all down the ages.

Bristol.

URIAH R. THOMAS.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: THE WORLD'S
GREATEST BLESSING, AND
ITS GREATEST EVIL.

"Lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."—1 COR. i. 17.

Preliminary remarks of a most interesting and suggestive kind might be offered on the context. But we have only space here to notice the two things presented to us in the few words which we adopt as our text. Here we have—

I. The greatest BLESSING in the world—"the Cross of Christ." By "the Cross of Christ" the Apostle did not mean of course, the timber on which Christ was crucified, or

any imitation of that in wood, brass, marble, gold, silver, or paint. He uses the word as a symbol, as we use the words Crown, Court, Bench, etc. He meant the eternal principles of which the cross of Christ was at once the effect, the evidence, and the expression: he meant, in one word, all that we mean by the Gospel. And this, we say, is the greatest blessing in the world to-day. The human world lives under a system of mercy, and mercy pours on it every hour blessings innumerable. But no blessing has come to it, has ever been found in it, or will

ever come to it, equal to the Cross, or the Gospel. Look at it, for example, in only three of its many aspects, and you will be impressed with its incomparable worth.

First : As a *revealer*. The chief value of the material universe is, that it reveals the spiritual and the eternal ; but the Gospel reveals all that the material does of God and the universe with much greater fulness and effect. It presents the image of the invisible God. All true theological doctrine and ethical science come to us through the Cross. It is the moral light of the world.

Secondly : As an *educator*. That in human life which is the most successful in quickening, evolving, and strengthening all the powers of the human mind, is its chief blessing. The "Cross of Christ" has done this a thousand times more effectively than any other agency. Art, government, science, poetry, philosophy, owe infinitely more to it than to any other agent in the world. The Cross is to the human soul what the vernal sunbeam is to the seed ; it penetrates, warms, quickens ; and brings all its latent powers out to perfection.

Thirdly : As a *deliverer*. The Cross is more than a revealer or an educator, it is a deliverer. The human soul is condemned, diseased, enthralled ; everywhere it groans under the sentence of its own

conscience. It languishes under a moral malady : it is fettered by lusts, prejudices, evil habits, and social influences : its deepest cry is, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me ?" The Cross bears a pen to cancel the sentence, a balm to heal the wound, a weapon to break the fettering chain.

Such, and infinitely more, is the Cross. What would human life be without it ? A voyage without a compass, chart, or star.

Here we have—

II. The greatest EVIL in the world. What is the evil ? Making this Cross of "none effect." That is "none effect" so far as its grand mission is concerned. Some effect it must have ; it will deepen the damnation where it does not save. "We are unto God a sweet savour," etc.

We offer three remarks concerning this tremendous evil.

First : It is *painfully manifest*. The fact is patent to all, that the Cross has not to any great extent in Christendom produced its true effect. Though it has been in the world for 1800 years, not one tenth of the human population know anything about it, and not one hundredth of those who know something of it, experience its true effect. Intellectually, socially, politically, it has confessedly done wonders for mankind ; but

morally, how little ! How little genuine holiness, disinterested philanthropy, self-sacrificing devotion to truth and God, Christliness of life ! In all moral features, England is well-nigh as hideous as heathendom.*

Secondly : It is *easily explained*. How is it done ? The Apostle in this verse indicates one way in which it could be done, that is, by "wisdom of words," by which we understand him to mean gorgeous rhetoric. What is called the Church has done it ; that is, the assembly of men who profess to be its disciples, representatives, ministers, and promoters. The Church has done it (1) by its *theologies*. In its name it has propounded dogmas that have clashed with reason and outraged conscience. It has done so (2) by its *polity*. It has sanctioned wars, promoted priestcraft, established foul hierarchies, which have fattened on the ignorance and poverty of the people. It has done so (3) by its *spirit*. The spirit of the Church, as a rule, is in direct antagonism to the spirit of the Cross. The spirit of the Cross is self-sacrificing love, the spirit of the Church has been to a great extent that of selfish-

ness, greed, ambition, and oppression. Malrepresentation of Christ by the Church is the instrument that has made the Cross of "none effect."

Thirdly: It is *terribly criminal*. It is wonderful that man has the power thus to pervert Divine institutions and blessings ; but such perverting power he has, and he uses it every day even in natural things. He forges metals into weapons for murder, he turns breadcorn into liquids to damn the reasons and the souls of men. Wonderful power this ! and terrible is the crime for employing it in perverting the Cross of Christ. A greater crime than this you cannot conceive of. Were you to turn all bread into poison, make the flowing rivers pestiferous, quench the light of the sun, mantle the stars in sackcloth, you would not perpetrate an evil half so enormous as that of making the Cross of Christ of "none effect."

CONCLUSION : Two questions. (1) What is the spiritual influence of the Cross on us ? Has it crucified unto us the world, destroyed in us the worldly spirit—the spirit of practical atheism, materialism, and selfishness ? (2) What are we doing with the Cross ? Are we abusing it or rightly employing it ?

* See "Modern Christianity, a Civilized Heathenism." By the Author of "Fight at Europa's School."

Subject: THE MERCY OF CHRIST IN THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."—1 TIM. 1, xvi.

From this passage we may draw the following truths.

I. That the MORAL CONVERSION OF MEN IS TO BE ASCRIBED TO THE MERCY OF CHRIST. Paul is speaking of his conversion, and says, "For this cause I obtained mercy." In the 13th verse he says, I was "before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious (an insulter); but I obtained mercy." Conversion must be ascribed to Christ's mercy.

First: In contradistinction to the *efforts of the individual himself*. Every man should seek the conversion of his soul. This is his duty, this is necessary. He has no just reason for expecting the blessed change irrespective of his effort, hence he is called upon to return to the Lord, to repent, to be converted, etc. But however strenuous and proper his efforts, they of themselves do not effect the object. They are only instrumental, not efficient; they are the secondary, not the primary cause. Christ's free sovereign mercy is the cause. "By grace are ye saved," "Unto Him that loved us," etc.

Secondly: In contradistinction to the *ministry of others*. It is required that men should seek the conversion of their fellows. This is the especial work of ministers of the Gospel; they are to exhort, reprove, admonish, intreat, etc. But however earnest and Christly their efforts, they do not effect the work. Christ does it, "Of His mercy hath He saved us." This agrees with the deep consciousness and experience of every converted soul. Ask any saint in heaven or on earth, and he will say, "I obtained mercy." "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant." This fact serves two purposes—(1) To encourage all human efforts put forth to effect the work of conversion. Whilst this mercy does not supersede human effort, it inspires, directs, and blesses it. It is free and ready to crown with success the humblest attempt. As the atmosphere in spring waits to bless the efforts of the husbandman, Christ's mercy waits to bless all labours put forth to effect the conversion of men. The fact serves (2) To inspire all redeemed spirits with the ecstasies of everlasting gratitude. Gratitude is happiness. Gratitude wakes, sustains, and heightens the harmonies of heaven. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us," etc. From this passage we observe—

II. That the MERCY OF CHRIST IS EQUAL TO THE CONVERSION OF THE GREATEST SINNER. In the previous verse Paul calls himself the "chief of sinners." As he spoke from inspiration we must regard this estimate of himself as a true one, and suppose that no greater sinner ever lived. We are told that he made "havoc of the Church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." This is what Luke said about him. And he says of himself, "Beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it." And again he says, "I punished them oft, in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Notwithstanding this, the mercy of Christ reached him. See an account of the appearance of Christ to him in Acts xx. 11-18. Christ's mercy, then, is equal to the conversion of even the greatest sinner. No one is too polluted for Him to cleanse, too diseased for Him to heal, too guilty for Him to pardon, too benighted for Him to enlighten, too enslaved for Him to liberate. "He is able to save to the uttermost," etc. His mercy is as vast as the heavens that encircle us, as boundless as the ocean, as free as the light

of heaven and the flowing air. From this passage we observe,—

III. That THE GREATER THE SINNER CONVERTED THE MORE GLORIOUS THE MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST'S MERCY. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering." The more difficult the gulf to span, the more the genius of the engineer is displayed in the constructed bridge that answers the end. The more complicated and serious the disease of the patient, the more the skill and the science of the physician is displayed that restores him to health. In like manner, the greater the sinner converted the more of the mercy of Christ is revealed. Mercy has its degrees. Mercy longsuffering, mercy intreating, mercy forgiving, and mercy forgiving the greatest sinner, is mercy in its highest manifestation.

IV. That the more glorious the manifestation of Christ's mercy, the more BENEFICENT ITS INFLUENCE ON COMING AGES. "For a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." Paul regarded himself as standing before the eyes of all coming generations as a witness to the mercy of Christ. He felt that the Lord had dealt with him as a king of a rebellious city who had released the leader

of the insurrection, as a physician in a hospital who had cured the most hopeless patient, so that henceforth no one guilty or diseased need despair.

Subject: GOD'S INCOMPREHENSIBLE GREATNESS ILLUSTRATED BY LITTLE THINGS.

"Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out. For He maketh small the drops of water." JOB xxxvi. 26, 27.

These words suggest two thoughts concerning God's greatness,—

I. MAN CANNOT COMPREHEND IT. "God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of His years be searched out."

First: Man cannot comprehend His *nature*. "God is great, and we know Him not." Great in Himself. All His attributes transcend our understanding. The word God stands for infinite mystery. An ocean that has no limits, fathomless and unbounded.

"Thy nature is the mystery
In which all thoughts are lost,
Archangels wonder at Thee
Through heaven's unnumbered host:
Unbounded is Thy essence.
All space is full of Thee,
And 'tis Thy blessed presence
That sums immensity."

Who is like unto Thee, O Lord? No one in the universe. Sublimely unique, the matchless and the measureless. "Touching the Al-

mighty we cannot find Him out."

Secondly: Man cannot comprehend His *history*. "Neither can the number of His years be searched out." How old are the mountains? They are called everlasting; but before the mountains were brought forth He was. How old are the heavens? No science has yet been able to compute their age: but "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the work of Thy hand." He inhabiteth eternity. Who can comprehend this?

"The drops that swell the ocean,
The sands that girt the shore,
To measure His duration,
Their numbers have no power."

In the presence of His greatness, (1) all the glories of mankind dwindle into insignificance. What are all the things that men call great among themselves,—crowns, thrones, sceptres, equipages,—compared to His greatness? More contemptible far than the pyrotechnic flashes in the presence of the splendour of the starry heavens. In the presence of His greatness, (2) with what profound reverence should we ever think and speak of Him. When Isaiah in vision saw "the Lord high and lifted up, and His train filling the temple," he cried out "Woe is me!" And when Christ in His glory appeared to John in Patmos, he

says, "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as if dead." The thought of God's greatness tends to humble, to quicken, to sanctify, and to solemnize.

These words suggest another thought concerning God's greatness :—

II. LITTLE THINGS ILLUSTRATE IT. "For He maketh small the drops of water ;" or as some render it, "He draweth up the drops of water." Elihu seems to connect God's greatness with His attention to the drops of water. Men are prone to think of God—when they think at all of Him—only in connection with the great and the awful. They see Him in the flash of lightning, not in the sunbeam, hear Him in the thunder, not in the whispering air. Ever should we remember that great and small are but relative terms ; what is great to one being, is small to another. To God there is nothing small or great. And ever should we remember also, that God has as much connection with what we consider small as with the great.

First : The greatness of His *wisdom* is seen in the small. Take the microscope and examine life in its minutest form, and what wonderful skill you discover in the organization : as much wisdom as the telescope will show you amongst the rolling worlds of space.

Secondly : The greatness of His *goodness* is seen in the small. The smallest sentient creatures are endowed with desires and capacities for enjoyment ; and for their pleasure ample provision has been made. "He openeth His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

Thirdly : The greatness of His *taste* is seen in the small. Take the wing of the smallest insect, or the smallest grain of ore, and what exquisite forms and what beautiful combinations of colour. You are perhaps more impressed with the sense of beauty than when you survey the landscape. God is the Fountain of beauty, and the streams are manifest in those departments of life that are hidden from the unaided eye.

Fourthly : The greatness of His *power* is seen in the small. It is by the little things that He does His wonderful works. It is by the little drops of water that He draws up that He makes the clouds that fertilize the earth, it is by the sunbeam that He quickens nature, by the insects that He builds up islands, by atoms that He fabricates globes. It is so in the human world. By one human thought, or by the agency of an obscure man, or by what appears to all some trivial occurrence He often effects revolutions in kingdoms. Indeed, that which He has

introduced in order to effect the moral restoration of humanity is represented as a seed which is the least of all seeds. Let us not despise the little. Truly great men show their greatness more in the trivial acts of daily life than in those dashing deeds that make the nations stare.

Subject: THE GENUINE
CHRISTIAN. *used*

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—PHIL. iv. 19.

These words suggest a few thoughts in relation to the genuine Christian.

I. HIS NEEDS ARE GREAT. "All your needs." His *physical* needs are great. Of all the creatures that come to life, he has the greater number of natural wants. His *social* needs are great. From the dawn of his life he requires the friendly hand of social sympathy. His deepest craving is for social love; he could not live or grow without it. His *mental* needs are great. His mind could devour the libraries of the world, and yet crave for more. His *spiritual* needs are great. He needs knowledge, reconciliation to God, assimilation to the Divine image, etc. Spiritually, the more a man knows the deeper his craving for knowledge, the farther advanced in goodness, the

stronger and more intense the desire to reach higher, etc. etc.

II. HIS SUPPLIES ARE ABUNDANT. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory." The provisions that God has made for genuine Christians are adaptive, fully satisfying, unexhausted, and inexhaustible. We may well, therefore, take up the 23rd psalm, and sing "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." He is, indeed, a sun and shield; He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Whatever you want is with Him in abundance to supply.

This fact—

First: *affords ample grounds for unbounded confidence.*

"Take no anxious thought for the morrow." "Be careful for nothing, but in everything with prayer and thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee."

This fact—

Secondly: *Suggests a glorious future for the good.* The soul needing and God supplying, perpetual receptivity and perennial supplies, this is the future; the ever hungry, ever widening soul drinking in from almighty love all needful and satisfying supplies—this is heaven.

III. HIS HELPER IS SUFFI-

CIENT. "By Christ Jesus." God may and does supply our physical and, to some extent, our intellectual and social needs by nature; but our spiritual needs—which are the most urgent and imperative—He supplies only by Christ Jesus. He does not supply the needs of the human soul by legislation, by science, by art, or by philosophy, but by Jesus Christ. Jesus is the minister to the soul. He is the Samaritan, to bind up its wounds; He is the Guide to conduct it safely through its dreary pilgrimage; He is the Shepherd, to guard it from dangers, appease its hunger, and to lead it into pastures of inexhaustible supplies.

Subject: THE LEADING FOE
AND THE LEADING FRIEND
OF HUMANITY.

"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."—Luke xxii. 31, 32.

In Series III., vol. iii., page 289, there will be found a sketch from our pen on these words. But as the passage is a very striking and suggestive one, and another sermon plan has struck us, we need offer no apology for bringing forward the subject a second time.

We infer from it two great facts.—

I. That man has in the MORAL SPHERE OF HIS BEING A GREAT LEADING FOE AND A GREAT LEADING FRIEND. The one is Satan and the other is Christ. We learn from the words,—

First: That both are *superhuman*. The various accounts which the Bible gives us of the being here called Satan, assure us that he is superhuman in intelligence, skill, power, activity, and influence. He is the prince of the power of the air; he leads man captive at his will. Christ is confessedly superhuman, though He was subject to the ordinary laws of humanity; yet the circumstances of His birth, the wonders that His mighty hand performed, and the extraordinary phenomena connected with His death, demonstrate that He had an existence transcending the human. Man's greatest Friend, then, and his greatest foe are both superhuman, both above the reach and span of our nature.

Secondly: That both are *profoundly interested in individual men*. Here we find Satan setting his heart on Simon Peter, a poor fisherman. Satan has a heart. He is not a being of cold, sheer intellect, for he "desired to have" Peter. Christ's heart also is on Peter. Wonderful this,—these two great super-

human beings are not only interested in the race, the masses, generations, nations, and communities, but in individual men. One lonely soul attracts them. What a wonderful existent the human soul must be; though we may think but little of it, it is an object of concern to the greatest beings in the universe.

We infer:—

II. THAT MAN'S LEADING FRIEND IS GREATER THAN HIS LEADING FOE. For illustration of this observe:—

First: *That He understands the foe, the foe does not understand Him.* Christ knew Satan, knew his heart, read him through and through, knew all his desires and purposes concerning Peter. Christ not only knows what is in man, but knows what is in the devil, what is in the fiends, He reads hell. But the devil does not know Him. He knows something of his outward history, something of His grand purpose; but he cannot comprehend his existence, still less can he read the thoughts of His heart. Satan is no mystery to Christ, He knows all about him; but Christ is the mystery of mysteries to Satan.

Observe,—

Secondly: *That His purpose is to preserve, Satan's is to destroy.* Satan's idea was, (1) To annihilate the faith of Simon. It was to shake his

confidence in Christ, win him over to himself, and thus effect his utter ruin. Destroy the faith of a soul in truth and God, and that soul is lost—lost to virtue, to peace, to heaven, to God. The purpose of Christ is to preserve this faith. “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” (2) To annihilate the usefulness of Simon. “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” When thou art converted, when thy weak, shaken, tottering faith has been established, then “strengthen thy brethren.” Seek to establish their hearts in the truth, and so render their moral purposes for good invincible. Peter did this nobly, as we find in the Acts of the Apostles. The work of destruction is a very poor work. The meanest creature can do it, an insect may kill the lion. But the work of preservation is divine. God alone can restore.

Thirdly: *That He has the Highest Helper.* “I have prayed for thee.” The Infinite God was with Christ and to Him He looks for co-operation. Satan has no God with him. God is against him. He has no one to pray to.

Subject: CONTRAST BETWEEN THIS LIFE AND THE LIFE TO COME.

“And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this

world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."—LUKE xx. 34-36.

These words are part of the dispute which Christ had with the Sadducees concerning matrimony in the resurrection. For remarks on the narrative generally, see "Genius of the Gospel," p. 572. We merely take the words at present to point out the contrast between *the good man's future world and his present one*. The existence of a future world for him is here taught by Christ. He says, "they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world,"—that is, the great world into which good men enter after their departure from this life. The contrast between the two worlds, as here indicated by Christ, includes four things:—

I. There is no MARRIAGE OBSERVANCE there. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage." Here men marry "and are given in marriage." From the beginning it has been so. The connubial instinct is one of the great mainsprings keep-

ing the wheels of society in perpetual motion. But in the other world, we are here taught, this ordinance has no existence. The social love there is sublimated, it is purely spiritual. All spirits there enter into the closest social and family relationships by doing the will of their Father who is in heaven.

II. There is no WORTHLESS CHARACTER there. All there are "accounted worthy." Men are brought into this world not on account of their worthiness, nor are they continued because they are worthy of it; but in that world all the denizens are "accounted worthy" of the place. This world is populated with men not worthy of it.

III. There is no GROSS ORGANIZATION there. Here we live in bodies of clay, subject to the same laws as those of all irrational life; but in that world all are the "children of the resurrection." For a description of the resurrection body, see 1 Cor. xv. 42-44. All human bodies there are fashioned, made like unto the glorious body of Jesus Christ. No hunger, no thirst, no gross impulses and lusts.

IV. There is no MORTALITY there. "Neither can they die any more." From Adam to Moses, from Moses to Christ, and from Christ to this hour, and so on to the end of the world, all men die.

But there "neither can they die." Why can they not? Not because God cannot annihilate, not because they are essentially immortal. This would make them independent of God. But because the Infinite has purposed they shall live for ever.

V. There is no MORAL INFERIORITY there. "They are equal unto the angels." Equal not perhaps in intellectual might and attainment, but in freeness from sin, as free as angels from all carnalities. How pure are the angels? They are called holy angels, etc.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the minor prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through Hosea and Joel, two of the minor prophets, we come now to Amos. He, we are informed, was a native of Tekoa, a small region in the tribe of Judah, about twelve miles south-east of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of his parents. He evidently belonged to the humbler class of life, and pursued the occupation of the humble shepherd. From his flock he was divinely called to the high office of prophet; and though himself of the tribe of Judah, his mission was to Israel. He was sent to Bethel, into the kingdom of the ten tribes. He commenced his ministry in the reign of Uzziah, between 810 and 783 B. C., and therefore laboured about the same time as Hosea. In his time idolatry, with its concomitant evils and immoralities of every description, reigned with uncontrolled sway among the Israelites, and against these evils he hurls his denunciations. The book has been divided into three parts: "First, sentences pronounced against the Syrians, the Philistines, the Phœnicians, the Edomites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Jews, and the Israelites, chapters i, and ii. Second, special discourses delivered against Israel, chapters iii, to vi. Third, visions, partly of a consolatory and partly of a comminatory nature, in which reference is had both to the times that were to pass over the ten tribes previous to the coming of the Messiah, and to what was to take place under His reign, chapters vii, to ix. His style is marked by perspicuity, elegance, energy, and fulness. His images are mostly original, and taken from the natural scenery with which he was familiar.

NO. CVII.

Subject: THE RESTORATION OF
THE TRUE MORAL THEOCRACY.

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I

will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes

him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God."—AMOS ix. 11-15.

In the previous verses we have had to notice the destruction of the sinful kingdom: in this paragraph we have the establishment of the true kingdom—the true moral theocracy. "In that day." *i. e.*, when the judgment has fallen upon the sinful kingdom, and all the sinners of the people of Israel are destroyed. "The Israelites," says Dr. Henderson, "now disappear from the scene, in order to give place to a brief and prominent exhibition of the restoration of the Jews from their repressed condition during their anticipated captivity in Babylon." The apostle James, at the first ecclesiastical council at Jerusalem, quotes this prophecy, *—not, however, its identical phraseology, but its general meaning,—and applies it to the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world by the admission of the Gentiles into it. The old Hebrew world was for ages governed by a theocracy. God was their king. He had under Him and by His appointment human rulers and other functionaries; but they were simply His instruments and He was their king. That form of government has

passed away; but it was symbolical: it was the emblem of a higher theocracy, that is to be established, not over the Jews merely, but over the Gentiles and over the whole world, it was to stand for ever. We shall use these words as an illustration of this theocratic government. Four thoughts are suggested concerning it. —

I. IT ROSE FROM THE HUMBLEST CONDITION. "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." "The fallen hut of David."—*Delitzsch*. Not the magnificent palace of David which the monarch built for himself on Mount Zion (1 Sam. v. 11). "It is striking that Amos, prophesying in Israel, closes with a promise, not to the ten tribes primarily, but to the royal house of David and to Israel only through its restoration. Strange comment on human greatness, that the royal line was not to be employed in the salvation of the world until it was fallen. The royal palace had to become the hut of Nazareth ere the Redeemer of the world could be born, whose glory and kingdom were not of this world. . . . Who came to take from us nothing but our nature, that He might sanctify it, our misery that he might bear it for us."—*Pusey*. Ay, this true moral theocracy had in truth a humble origin! Its Founder, who was He? The son of a poor Jewish peasant, who commenced His life in a stable. Its first apostles, who were they? They were amongst the poorest of the poor. In its origin, indeed, its symbols are the little stone, the grain of mustard-seed, and the few particles of leaven.

* Acts xv. 16, 17.

II. HEATHENS ARE SUBJECT TO ITS AUTHORITY. "That they may possess the remnant of Edom and of all the heathen which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this." The old theocracy was confined to the Jews; this one, this moral theocracy, is to extend to the heathen. Even Edom,—the old and inveterate foe of the theocratic people, who may be regarded as the representative of the whole heathen world,—is to be subjected to it. It shall "inherit the Gentiles." It is to have the heathen for its inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for its possession. The Bible assures us, in language most explicit and of frequent occurrence, that the time will come when from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same His name, that is the name of this great moral King, Christ,—shall be great among the Gentiles. Or, in the language of Daniel, "When the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

III. ABUNDANT MATERIAL PROVISIONS WILL ATTEND IT. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt." "The metaphorical language here employed is at once in the highest degree bold and pleasing. The Hebrews were accustomed to construct terraces on the sides

of the mountains and other elevations, on which they planted vines. Of this fact the prophet avails himself, and represents the immense abundance of the produce to be such that the eminences themselves would appear to be converted into the juice of the grape." Just as this moral theocracy extends, pauperism will vanish. With the kingdom of God and His righteousness all necessary material good comes. Godliness is profitable unto all things. Let this theocracy, which means the reign in human hearts of Christliness, extend, and the earth "shall yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us."

IV. LOST PRIVILEGES ARE RESTORED AS IT ADVANCES. "I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel. And they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens and eat the fruit of them." Three blessings, which man has lost through depravity, are here indicated. First: *Freedom*. "I will bring again the captivity," or rather, I will reverse the captivity, give them liberty. Man in a state of depravity is a slave, a slave to lust, worldliness, etc., etc. This moral theocracy insures freedom to all its subjects. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Secondly: *Prosperity*. "Shall build the desolate cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof." One of the sad evils connected with man's fallen depravity is, that he does not reap the reward of his labours,

He builds cities and plants vineyards and makes gardens for others. Through the reign of social injustice he is prevented from enjoying the produce of his honest labours. Under this theocracy it will not be so. What a man produces he will hold and enjoy as his own. Thirdly : *Settledness*. "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." Unregenerate man has ever been restless, homeless, unsettled. He stands not on a rock, but rather on planks floating on surging waters ; he is never at rest. All the subjects of the true theocracy are established. "God is their refuge and strength."

CONCLUSION : Let us have faith in this predicted future of the world. This faith can alone sustain us in our arduous work ; this faith has ever been the nerve of all the great men who have toiled for the world's good.

"Poet and seer that question caught
Above the din of life's fears
and frets ;
It marched with letters, it toiled
with thought,
Through schools and creeds
which the earth forgets.
And statesmen trifle and priests
deceive,
And traders barter our world
away ;
Yet hearts to the golden promise
cleave,
And still at times 'Is it
come ?' they say.
"The days of the nations bear no
trace
Of all the sunshine so far
foretold ;
The cannon speaks in the teacher's
place,
The age is weary with work
and gold ;
And high hopes wither, and
memories wane,
On hearths and altars the
fires are dead ;
But that brave faith hath not
lived in vain,
And this is all that our watch-
er said." *Frances Brown.*

OBADIAH.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts ! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word ; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSEA, JOEL and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem, we may with some confidence infer that he flourished after the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah ; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year B. c. 558, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible ; one chapter comprehends all. Its *subject* is the destruction of Edom, on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its *style* is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

No. CVIII.

Subject: GOD AND BAD MEN.

"The vision of Obadiah. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom; we have heard a rumour from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the heathen, Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle."—OBADIAH i. 1.

These words suggest two thoughts concerning God and bad men.

I. THAT GOD MAKES A REVELATION CONCERNING BAD MEN.

Here is a revelation concerning Edom, the enemy of God and His people. Isaac had two sons by Rebecca, Esau and Jacob; Esau was called Edom because he robbed his brother of his birthright (Genesis xxv.).

Observe, First :

The *forms* of the revelation.

(1) As a *vision*. "The vision of Obadiah." The prophet was a seer. The Eternal revealed Himself to the eyes of the soul. He who would be a true minister of God must see the thing before he speaks it—"That which we have seen and handled," says the Apostle. Man has other eyes than those that are in his forehead. He has a faculty for seeing the invisible and the eternal; this distinguishes him from the brute. (2) As a *report*. "We have heard a rumour from the Lord." The word rumour means report; We have heard a report from Jehovah. He heard as well as saw. The soul has ears to catch the echoes of eternal thought. God in times past spake by the fathers to the prophets; and now, as in olden times, speaks by symbols and sayings, by appealing to the eye and the ear.

Observe, Secondly :

The *character* of this revelation, a message. "An ambassador is sent among the heathen." Did he mean by the ambassador himself, or any other prophet or prophets, or some celestial minister? It does not matter. The message is the thing, a message from Jehovah to the nation. God sends His messages to the nations in many ways and by many agents.

Observe, Thirdly :

The *subject* of the revelation. "Arise ye, and let us rise up against her in battle."

The object of the message was to stir up the Assyrians and afterwards the Chaldeans against Edom.

But our proposition is, that God makes a revelation concerning bad men; and the subject of that revelation embraces at least two things. First : *That their sins will ruin them*. This the Almighty has revealed over and over again in the Bible, and in every chapter of human history and experience. The burden of all is, "The wages of sin is death." Secondly : *That evangelical repentance will save them*. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and He will abundantly pardon." These two subjects are the great burden of God's revelation to bad men.

II. THAT GOD PUNISHES BAD MEN BY BAD MEN. He now sent a messenger amongst the nations, what for? To stir up the Assyrians and Chaldeans—both bad people—to wreak

vengeance on corrupt Edom.
 Why does He employ bad men
 for this awful work of retribu-
 tion? He could do it without
 any secondary agency at all,
 or, if He chose to employ any
 instrumentality, use the forces
 of nature and the monsters of
 the forest alone to do the work ;
 why employ bad men to punish
 bad men, fiend to punish fiend ?

By doing so,—

First : He reveals in the
most powerful way to the victim
the enormity of his sin. The
 torture which his fellow-man
 brings on him he is made to
 feel is but a slight stroke of
 that fiend of depravity which
 has set his own soul against his
 Maker.

By doing so,—

Secondly : He reveals His
 own *absolute power over the*
workings of the human heart.
 Thus "He maketh the wrath
 of men to praise him," etc. He
 works even the devil himself
 to carry out His will. But
 though God employs bad men
 to punish bad men by rapine,
 plunder, and bloody wars, it is
 not by His instigation, but by
 their own free will. He is not
 the author of evil. All good
 proceedeth from Him, and all
 evil is overruled by Him for
 the order and blessedness of
 the universe. The devil is not
 less a devil because he inflicts
 the penalties of justice on
 men.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Daniel's Dream of the Four Beasts.

"The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings : I beheld till the
 wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and
 made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.
 And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up
 itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the
 teeth of it : and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After
 this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of
 it four wings of a fowl ; the beast had also four heads : and dominion
 was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a
 fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it had
 great iron teeth : it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the
 residue with the feet of it : and it was diverse from all the beasts that
 were before it ; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and be-
 hold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom
 there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots : and, be-
 hold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speak-
 ing great things."—Dan. vii. 4-8.

"THE first beast (ver. 4) resembled a lion with eagle's
 wings. At the entrance to a temple at Birs Nimrud

there has been found (Layard, Bab. and Nin.) such a symbolical figure, viz., a winged eagle with the head of a man. There have been found also images of winged beasts at Babylon (Münter, Relig. der Bab.). These discoveries may be referred to as evidence that this book was composed in Babylon, and also as explaining the Babylonian colouring of the dream. But the representation of nations and kingdoms by the images of beasts is much more widely spread, and affords the prophetic symbolism the necessary analogues and substrata for the vision. Lions and eagles are not taken into consideration here on account of their strength, rapacity, and swiftness, but simply because they are kings among beasts and birds. "The beast rules royally like the lion, and wings its conquering royal flight high over the *οικουμένην* like the eagle." —*Kliefoth*. This emblem corresponds with the representation of the first kingdom with the golden head (chap. ii). What gold is among metals, and the head among the members of the body, that the lion is among beasts, and the eagle among birds.

After a time Daniel sees a change take place with this beast. The wings, *i. e.* the feathers by which it flies, are plucked off: it is deprived of its power of flight, so that it can no more fly, conquering over the earth, or hover as a ruler over it; *i. e.* the kingdom will be deprived of the power of conquering, for it will be lifted up from the earth, *וַיִּקָּם* is hoph., cf. chap. iv. 33, and be placed on its feet as a man. The lifting up from the earth does not represent, accordingly, being taken away or blown away from the earth, not the destruction of the Chaldean kingdom (Theodrt., Hieron., Raschi, Hitzig, and others), but the raising of it up when lying prostrate on the ground to the right attitude of a human being. This change is further described by the words, "a man's heart was given to it," denoting that the beast-nature was transformed to that of a man. The three expressions thus convey the idea, that the lion, after it was deprived of its power of flight, was not only in external appearance raised from the form of a beast to that of a man,

but also that inwardly the nature of the beast was ennobled into that of a man. In this description of the change that occurred to the lion there is without a doubt a reference to what is said of Nebuchadnezzar in chap. iv.: it cannot, however be thence concluded, with Hofmann and others, that the words refer directly to Nebuchadnezzar's insanity ; for here it is not the king but the kingdom that is the subject, with reference to whose fate that event in the life of its founder was significant. Forasmuch as it was on account of his haughtiness that madness came upon him, so that he sunk down to the level of the beasts of the field, so also for the same reason was his kingdom hindered in its flight over the earth. "Nebuchadnezzar's madness was for his kingdom the plucking off of its wings ;" and as when he gave glory to the most High his reason returned to him, and then for the first time he attained to the true dignity of man, so also was his world-kingdom ennobled in him, although the continued influence of this ennobling may not be perceived from the events in the reign of his son, recorded in chap. v. Besides, there lies herein not only the idea of the superiority of the first world-kingdom over the others, as is represented in chap. ii. by the golden head of the metallic image, but also manifestly the typical thought that the world-kingdom will first be raised to the dignity of manhood when its beast-like nature is taken away. Where this transformation does not take place, or where it is not permanent, there must the kingdom perish. This is the prophetic meaning, for the sake of which that occurrence in the life of the founder of the world-monarchy is here transferred to his kingdom.

(To be continued.)

LIFE.—God help us ! it is a foolish little thing, this human life, at the best ; and it is half ridiculous and half pitiful to see what importance we ascribe to it, and to its little ornaments and distinctions.—*Jeffrey.*

Homiletical Brebiaries.

No. CLXXXII.

Subject: CHRIST'S WISH ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you."—
LUKE xxii. 15.

Christ's wish concerning the Lord's Supper will certainly command the ear, mind, and heart of every disciple to-day, as it did nearly two thousand years ago. Then it was an intensely strong wish. Is it not now? In considering this, let us notice, I. CHRIST'S REASONS FOR WISHING THAT PASSOVER with the disciples. Though they are scarcely divisible, because He so completely identified Himself with His disciples, we may notice the reasons for His own sake, and for theirs. 1. For His own sake, (1) *Obedience to His Father's Law*. This He did in spirit, though He used His Divine right in modifying Jewish ritual to its highest end. (2) *Sharing the sympathy of the disciples*. A common meal was the natural, as it is the universal, expression of relations of friendship. And those relations He wanted, in prospect of farewell, to realize. (3) *Anticipation of heavenly joy*. He made this festival an antepast of the Feast above. (4) *Fulfilment of His own mission*. "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." He was longing for the death that should give life to the world, and this supper was at once its symbol and its nearest time-mark. For, once over, Calvary would soon be gained. 2. For the disciples' sake. (1) *That they might learn the truth about Him*. This the emblems to be used by Him would vividly teach. (2) *That they might have a memorial of Him*. II. THAT PASSOVER IS OBSERVED IN THE LORD'S SUPPER. This meal took the place of the Passover by anticipation of some hours, and has succeeded it all through the Christian centuries. Do this "till I come." III. CHRIST'S REASONS FOR WISHING HIS DISCIPLES NOW TO TAKE THE LORD'S SUPPER. Many are the same as then. All may be gathered up into, -1. *Expression of loving loyalty to Him*. 2. *Means of union with Him*. 3. *Means of union with each other*.

Bristol,

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

No. CLXXXIII.

Subject: THE DEAD.

"For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living : for all live unto Him."—LUKE XX. 38.

From these words we infer : I. That all good men, whether their bodies are in the grave or existing on the earth, ARE ALIVE BEFORE GOD. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had long been in their graves, long gone to dust, yet they were living. The visible world of men and the invisible world of spirits are both present to the eye of God as "one community" of living beings. Death is not the extinction of being, but the mere transition in its mode. All the generations of men that have ever appeared on this earth are living, thinking, acting still. God is not the "God of the dead, but of the *living*." II. That all good men, whether their bodies are in the grave or existing on this earth, LIVE UNTO GOD. "All live *unto* Him." They all form therefore *one* holy blessed community, burning with one great love, pursuing one great aim. Glorious oneness this !

No. CLXXXIV.

Subject: RELIGIOUS THOUGHTFULNESS.

"O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!"—DEUT. xxxii. 29.

These are the words of a great man, on a great occasion, on a great subject. The man was Moses, the venerable and illustrious leader and lawgiver of Israel. The occasion was his farewell to the people of his charge : he was then 120 years of age, and about to die ; and he pours out his remaining energy and life in this valedictory address. The subject is that of *religious thoughtfulness*. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would *consider* their latter end." In relation to this subject we offer two remarks. I. It is a subject of SUPREME IMPORTANCE. The power of thought distinguishes man from the brute, and it is that faculty by which he either makes or ruins himself. According to the *subjects* and *modes* of his thought his character is formed. If he wishes to be a merchant, he must think on commercial subjects—a politician, on political subjects—a philosopher, on philosophical subjects ; but if he wishes to become a *true man*, he must think on religious subjects, he must

meditate on God, man, duty, destiny. Thought is necessary for two reasons. (1) In order to *realize* these subjects. These subjects may come under his notice in books, conversations, sermons, yet they will have no effect upon him unless he thinks. While we muse the fire burns. (2) In order to *appropriate* these subjects. Religious subjects, in order to make us great, useful, and happy, must be taken into us, appropriated, made the stimulus and nutriment of our own spiritual life. And this can only be done by thought. "As I thought of my ways," said David, "I turned my steps to Thy statutes." All depends on thought. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

II. It is a subject LAMENTABLY NEGLECTED. The exclamation of Moses here implies that self-satisfied, stiff-necked Israel had neglected it. They were religiously thoughtless. This has always been the case with the millions, it is the case now. Millions of our countrymen are not thoughtless people, they are thinking every day with more or less earnestness on every subject except religion—business, art, science, government, but they are not *religiously* thoughtful. Why do they neglect this subject? Not because they doubt its reality, for the people generally are not sceptics; not because these subjects are not brought under their notice; nature, churches, societies, literature, bring them under their notice. Why do they not think of them. (1) Their minds are pre-occupied with other subjects. (2) They have an inner dread of those solemn things.

No. CLXXXV.

Subject: RELIGIOUS REVIVALS.

"O Lord, revive Thy work."—HABAKKUK iii. 2.

We offer three thoughts—I. GENUINE RELIGION IS THE WORK OF GOD IN THE SOUL. "Thy work." What is genuine religion? Not theology, not ceremony, but simply this, *supreme love to God*. This is its core, its essence. Where this is, whatever else is absent, genuine religion is; where this is absent, whatever else is present, genuine religion is not. The production of this in the soul is the work of God. He produces it, it is true, by means; nevertheless, no one else can or does produce it but Himself. II. THIS WORK OF GOD IN THE SOUL IS LIABLE TO DECAY. Hence the prayer to "revive" it. There are many things in and outside

of man that tend to impair, weaken, and destroy this supreme love. Carnal impulses, impure associations, social influences, engrossing worldly cares, these are all detrimental. They are to it like a blighting atmosphere to vegetation. III. THIS DECAY SHOULD BE OVERCOME BY A REVIVAL. "Revive Thy work." Revive this supreme love—quicken, energize it, give it more force and influence in the soul! This is the true revival. What is called Religious Revival at this time, is a revival of crude theological dogmas, of mawkish sentiment, of pietistic cant, of hymnological sensualities, of superstitious fears, and of selfish longings for personal enjoyment.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Pig and the Reptiles,—Coarse Natures in Useful Employment.

THE pig is an important auxiliary in keeping rattlesnakes at a distance in countries where they abound. In the west and south of America, where a field or farm is infested by these ferocious reptiles, it is usual to put a sow with her young brood there; and the snakes, it is said, will soon be eaten up. It appears, that owing to the fatty matter which envelopes the body of this animal, it is safe from the venomous bite. Besides, it likes the flesh of the snakes, and eagerly pursues them. When a pig sees a rattlesnake, it smacks its jaws, and its hairs bristle up: the snake coils itself up to strike its enemy: the pig approaches fearlessly, and receives the blow in the fold of fat which hangs upon the side of its jaw. Then he places a foot on the tail of the snake, and with

his teeth he begins to pull the flesh of his enemy to pieces, and eats it with evident enjoyment.

Infidelity, intemperance, and tyranny are horrible social reptiles ; and they are often successfully attacked by ferocious, illiterate, gross “ revivalists ” and demagogues, who bristle up to their work of annihilating them, on a method and with a zest not inferior to this rattlesnake-destroyer. These men are not pleasant beings ; but, like those other coarse creatures, they are useful for coarse work, and they enjoy it. Their grossness is their qualification ; for the stings and wounds by which the progeny of vice would kill other public men, do not affect that bloated self-complacency and dense coarseness in which their rude nature is entirely enveloped. And our feelings of loathing and disgust for these rough sons of coarseness should always be tempered by the remembrance that they are not quite so bad as that which they destroy. The pig, after all, is better than the rattlesnake.

Subject: The Wild Ass,—Easy Subjugation.

THE ass, like the horse, was originally imported into America by the Spaniards, and afterwards by other nations. In its natural state this animal is swift, fierce, and formidable. When attacked, they defend themselves with their heels and mouth with such activity that, without slackening their pace, they often maim their pursuers. But the most remarkable property in these creatures, is, that after carrying their first load, their activity leaves them, their dangerous ferocity is lost, and they soon contract the stupid look and dulness peculiar to the asinine species.

There are men who in their constitution and history resemble this animal. A man of this calibre in his married life and his public career, or under the pressure of any troubles, always begins and ends in one never-varying way. He is first showy, pretentious, vociferous, and affects a vast amount of resisting force ; but as his manhood is only a resemblance to a thorough-bred man, he is soon quelled. A wife, a priest, or a tyrant places the load well on his back, and all his courage

departs for ever, and in dull submission he will continue to pace in perfect obedience to the bridle of authority.

Subject: The Falcon and the Partridge,—The Stupifying Effects of Fear.

AT the mere sight of one of the falcon tribe a partridge will stop as though struck with stupor, so overcome with fear as to be almost incapable of concealing itself, remaining absolutely immovable ; and it is not until the dreaded enemy is gone that it regains self-control. It will even permit itself to be stifled in its hiding-place, sooner than expose itself to the falcon, vulture, or sparrow-hawk.

The like stupifying effects of fear are constantly seen amongst mankind. The lives of many are subject to constant misery as the result of fears, sometimes reasonable, sometimes unreasonable, respecting the intentions of real or imaginary enemies. And probably there is no man who has not, at some time or other, been under the horrible spell of fear which, whether acting on man or bird, has for the time the power to snatch from the muscles and nerves all their vigour and tone, and deprive its subject of all capacity for action. So great a man as Eliphaz declares that fear made even all his bones to shake and the hair of his flesh to stand up.

Subject: The Peacock,—Appearance contrasting with Character.

WHEN the peacock appears with its tail expanded, there is none of the feathered creation can vie with it for beauty ; yet the horrid scream of its voice serves to abate the pleasure we find from viewing it ; and still more its insatiable gluttony and spirit of depredation make it one of the most vexatious domestics man has taken under his protection.

What Christian minister has not known “peacock” men in every department of life,—those who by their admirable demeanour, elegance, suavity, and graces, have irresistibly

awakened admiration ; yet, on acquaintance, were detected as the possessors of qualities which belied their appearance and rendered them odious ? Who has not known women of the same species, whose appearance suggested everything that was chaste, refined and graceful ; but whose disposition was in every way unlovely—who, like the peacock, were delightful as a spectacle, but in other respects detestable ?

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

LIFE.—The journey of human life is something like the journey of a man who climbs the Alps. He begins his way surrounded by beautiful scenery in the valleys, richly clustering trees, crystal waters—the air clear, balmy, and laden with sweet aromas. As he ascends, the air gets colder, the scenery more terrible, until he reaches the region of snow, where all is desolation and death. So with life. At first all is genial, lovely, and full of joy : the path is comparatively smooth ; but as he advances the path becomes more craggy, the scenery more terrible, the winds more chilling and cutting, until at last on the awful heights there is nothing but icy desolation.

WORK AND WAIT.—It is stated that the immortal astronomer whose penetrating genius discovered the laws of the motions of the planets,—Kepler of Wurtemberg, whose great labours were not understood by his contemporaries, so that he was reduced to the greatest distress,—when lying on his death bed,

and being asked by a friend whether he suffered not cruelly to be obliged to die without seeing his discoveries appreciated, answered, “My friend, God has waited 5000 years till one of His creatures discovered the admirable laws which He has given to the stars ; why should I then not wait till justice is done me ?” “Be not weary in well doing.”

TRUST TO INFINITE LOVE.—There is a story told of a chamois hunter in Switzerland somewhat illustrative of this subject. “Wandering one day over the Alps, he made a misstep and fell more than a hundred feet to the very bottom of one of those horrid crevices in the ice. It was impossible for him to get up : the sides were too slippery ; there were no means of climbing. He cried out ever so loud ; but no human ear could hear. There was nothing but absolute starvation—death before him. What could he do ? The water came pouring down in an everlasting flood : he followed the stream until he

entered a great cavern, high-arched, ice-ribbed. There the water gurgled and boiled and disappeared. He could see no exit. There was evidently one somewhere, for that living stream found its way out. There was but one thing for him to do. He looked up at the blue sky, commended himself to God's protection, and then with a strong effort threw himself bodily into that boiling, gurgling stream, and disappeared. A moment after the struggle, he found himself on the outside, thrown on the green grass of the valley of Chamounix, the noon-day sun shining above his head, and the blooming flowers of the mountain about him. The story is an exact type of the human life heavenward. Often when walking over the ice-fields of our own experience, we make a mis-step which precipitates us into the deep crevice of great misfortune, bereavement, and death. It is impossible to get back to the old position; but the river of love rolls its everlasting flood over the craggy mountain top of frozen life. Follow it. The struggle may be a hard one, but throw yourself in and trust blindly to God. When you hear the voice from heaven saying, "Throw yourself in!" then, though darkness be round about you, though the mind cannot take the situation in at all, though there be nothing but gloom and uncertainty concerning things, trust God. Hurl yourself into the vortex of His will. Say (and mean it too), "Thy will, O God, not mine, be done." You will find that when the flood has nearly stifled you it has at the

same moment been bearing you on, underground it may be, through darkness; but then at last it brings you in its arms safe through to the Vale of Chamounix, the green grass of the new life, surrounded by the flowers of faith, with the canopy of God's protecting power above your heads. If we have faith enough, all will come right at last. God be thanked for that."

HUMILITY.—The richest pearl lies in the deepest seas; the most clustered branch bends the lowest.

"This deep humility we find
The mark of every master mind."

MENTAL MOODS.—The human mind has its moods. These, like the various temperatures and seasons of the earth, are favourable for some results and unfavourable for others. But no material climate is so variable as that of the soul; its changes cannot be kept within the limits of freezing point and blood heat.

HUMAN DEPENDENCY.—No creature on earth is so dependent as man. The earth would blossom, the heavens would shine, the birds would sing, the cattle on the hills would gambol, were there no men; but men could not do without them.

EGOTISM.—There is a vast amount of egotism in our social prayer-meetings, and even in our pulpit devotions. The *I* is constantly projecting itself in our prayers. Men are only what they ought to be, are only true men, as they become self-oblivious. It is only as the carnal *ego* is crucified with Christ that the true *ego* rises into life, honour, and grandeur.

THE INNER MAN.—In all it has a life of its own. It has an orbit as distinct from all others as the planets that roll in space millions of miles away from each other. Every heart not alone knoweth its bitterness, but alone knoweth its own deep principles of action. Absolute loneliness is, after all, the condition of souls. All have to climb mountains concerning which the Almighty has said : "No man shall come up with thee."

THE GRAVE is a pit in which all worldly hopes, possessions, enterprises are lost for ever. All rest together in the dust. There is sometimes a melancholy pleasure in musing upon the grave. When weighed down beneath the trials of life, and when the heart is sickened with the alarming and growing prevalence of social fawnings and flunkeries, arrogancies and tyrannies, falsehoods and frauds, one's heart turns to the grave and finds relief in that deep tide of melancholy thought that buries all.

GOD IN ALL.—Right reason assures us that Divinity, if anywhere, must be everywhere—as truly in the atom as in the globe, in the blade as in the forest, in the calm as in the tempest, in the fly as in the eagle, as truly with the poorest men as with the greatest ; and that morally it flashes out in the life of the godly pauper more than in all the magnificent doings of mere worldly dignities.

THE KINGDOM THAT CANNOT BE MOVED.—Evil may and does work against the right, work unremittingly, resolutely, and in a thousand ways ; yet it can-

not injure it. It may work calmly, insidiously, but cannot sap its foundations ; or it may work in tempests, but it can produce no impression on its architecture. The kingdom of right, after all, is the only growing and enduring kingdom on earth.

THE SOUL.—What possibilities does a single grain possess ! Harvests slumber in one seed ; forests repose in one shell ! What wondrous potentialities lie within the human soul !

A MAN can only become important as he enunciates some great truth that attracts and welds souls together.

WORSHIP.—It is well when all our trials, afflictions, struggles, and varied experiences end in worship. Worship is the haven of the soul, and the *only* haven.

LOVE.—The bread of the soul, believe me, is not animal pleasure, not intellectual knowledge, not gold, not power, not fame. It is love—love as flowing from the heart of the living Father, as embodied in the life and inculcated in the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. He who lives in Christ, to use the language of another, stands at the focus of regeneration.

THE TRUE PREACHER.—Preaching is a gift of nature, a gift that involves the highest kind and fullest measure of faculty, imagination, intellect, passion, conscience, verbal fluency, and vocal effectiveness. It is a rare gift, only possessed by one in a thousand ; and the attempt to make any of the nine hundred and ninety-nine true preachers, must ever end in failure and disappointment. You can no more make a preacher than you can make a

poet. We are getting tired of "lectures on preaching." The poorest preachers amongst us are the most ready to enact homiletic rules and utter homiletic advice. The born preacher is the only man who can promote good preaching, and this by his own masterly discourses and effective delivery. He should be physically, intellectually, and morally of the highest type of manhood.

HAPPINESS.—No spirit in the universe can be happy without thorough harmony with the will and mind of God. Heaven is happy because of this harmony; hell is miserable because of antagonism to the Divine Mind.

WARNING.—Heaven does not punish without warnings. Nature warns, Providence warns, conscience warns; there is no sinful soul in which the trumpet of alarm does not sound.

THE GOSPEL.—We think it can be demonstrated that the Gospel is not only adapted to man, but is *essential* to man. If a man is to breathe, he must have air; if he is to see, he must have light; if he is to live, he must have food; and if he is to be happy,—happy as a moral and intelligent being,—he must have the Gospel. To prove this to men, is what is wanted in all our books and in all our preaching.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE NEW TESTAMENT TRANSLATED FROM THE CRITICAL TEXT OF VON TISCHENDORF; WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON THE CRITICISM, TRANSLATION, AND INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK. By SAMUEL DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D. London: Henry S. King, 65, Cornhill.

We are not a little pleased to receive another learned work from the scholarly pen of Dr. Davidson. When we entered on our ministry, now upwards of thirty years ago, two volumes were presented to us by a friend, which we have regarded ever since as the best books in our library, and from which from time to time we have derived invaluable assistance in our endeavours to interpret God's Holy Word. Dr. Davidson's volume on "Biblical Criticism" as well as that on "Sacred Hermeneutics" are

still invaluable to us ; and notwithstanding that since their publication Biblical scholarship has made some progress, the interpretation they give and the hermeneutic rules they propound demand the attention of every man who presumes to expound THE BOOK to others. We cannot better perhaps introduce the work now before us to our readers, than by furnishing them with an extract from the Author's preface. "The present version," says the Author, "originated in one of the conversations which the writer had with Von Tischendorf in the summer of 1872. That scholar had just completed the publication of the 8th critical edition, contemplating no future one, because his best efforts and mature judgment had been expended on the finished volumes. Having prepared a text for scholars, he naturally wished it to be read by all English-speaking people, and asked the Translator to make it accessible to that large class who do not know Greek. Feeling the arduousness of the task, the latter hesitated, but finally consented to gratify a friend whom he loved; and some arrangements were made at the time for its immediate performance. But difficulties arose. Von Tischendorf was struck down, and compelled to cease from mental occupation. Affliction came upon the present writer, also, who was visited with irreparable loss. The translation was interrupted by this bereavement and by a subsequent sojourn in Italy. But it was never abandoned. Though prosecuted slowly, the Author felt himself bound by a principle of honor to perform his promise. It has been a solace in affliction, a relief from the fruitless indulgence of regrets, an engrossing employment amid lonely longings for the society of the just made perfect. Our friend, alas! is not here to see the completed work. Had he lived, he would have written an Introduction to accompany the present one. But his ideas generally coincided with those of the Translator ; and he would have expressed little that has not been said here. His Preface would have related to the text he finally edited, whose antiquity he put on a par almost with originality ; for his opinion was, that the text of the second century is presented in substantial integrity."

The Author's Introduction is exceedingly valuable. It contains strictures, honest, generous, and enlightened, upon the translations of Dean Alford, the American Bible Union, and Dr. Noyes of Halle University, and others. It also lays down and vindicates the principle on which his own translation has proceeded, which is that of strict literality and the smallest possible amount of paraphrase. It has, moreover, many valuable remarks on certain disputed and misunderstood passages. As to the translation itself, it is as faithful to the original as any translation can be, and free from any theological and sectarian bias. There is no translation of the New Testament extant equal to it, and henceforth it must be used as *The New Testament in English*. In looking into it somewhat carefully, we have had one old regret concerning the Author removed, and another old regret strengthened. The one removed is this, that the Author was not appointed a member of the Bible Revision Committee. When that Committee was formed, we wondered and

grieved that such a Biblical scholar as Dr. Davidson was left out : there was no man in Europe more eligible, few men appointed who could approach him in linguistical attainment, Biblical scholarship, and critical acumen. With this translation in our hands this regret vanishes. The Revision Committee is formed of men of different communions and theological predilections. Their rendering, we presume, is a matter of voting. Numbers, not capacity, learning, or merit, will carry the day. It would be more than human, therefore, to expect a thoroughly faithful translation. While Dr. Davidson is profoundly Christian in doctrine and spirit, few men are freer from theological bias or ecclesiastical influences than he ; and as a scholar pre-eminent amongst scholars, we have here, therefore, a translation more faithful than we could possibly expect from any committee of men. But whilst this work has banished one regret it has strengthened another. The learned Author of this book, who was Professor of Biblical Literature in the Royal Academical University of Belfast some thirty-five years ago, subsequently held for many years a chair in the Lancashire Independent College. Why is he not there now ? His position there, we know, gave a prestige to the institution and shed a lustre on the communion to which it belonged ; and never had the Independent denomination fewer distinguished scholars than now. Why did he resign ? A few men,—most of whom, we think, are in their graves (and therefore their names shall not be mentioned),—raised against him the charge of heresy ; fools believed the charge. The Doctor walked away from their midst, if not with indignation, with a dignity that became a high-minded man. We have reason to believe that the most enlightened and ablest men of that communion have never ceased to regret the loss of such a man to their denomination. It is indeed a loss ; but no great souls can live in a denomination.

The Dedication of this book is exquisitely beautiful and touching ; its wail has struck in us one of the deepest chords of the heart.

THE RELIGION OF THE CHRIST. THE BAMPTON LECTURES FOR 1874.
BY REV. STANLEY LEATHES, M.A. London : Rivingtons.

The subjects of these lectures are,—“ Anticipation of the Christ in heathen nations ; The Christ of Jewish history ; The Christ of the Psalms ; The Christ of prophecy ; The Christ of the Gospels ; The Christ of the Acts ; the Christ of the Pauline Epistles ; The Christ of the other books.” “ The object of the Lectures,” says the author, “ has been to unfold the significance, too often overlooked or forgotten, of the name Christianity, which is neither more nor less than the religion of the Christ. As a matter of historic fact, the name by which this religion is known does not lead us back so to Christ as its Founder,—in the way that Mahomedanism leads us back to Mahomet for its founder,—as it does to Christ as the object and substance of the earliest ascertainable faith of the people called Christians. Whatever uncertainty, real or imaginary, may attach to the actual origin of this belief, there is and

can be no question whatever as to its earliest expressions. These survive to us in literary monuments which are imperishable and undoubted. The four great epistles of St. Paul are themselves a treasury of evidence in this respect ; and they must continue to be so until it can be shown on equal evidence, which as yet is not producible, that they represent only one phase, and that a partial and sectional phase, of early Christianity."

It is needless to say that the Author has accomplished the work he undertook in a most satisfactory manner. His lectures reveal extensive reading, much originality, vigorous thought, and a fine, clear, and energetic style of utterance.

THE KERNEL OF TRUTH, STRIPPED OF THE HUSK ; OR, THE SOUL AND THE SPIRIT OF MAN, AND THEIR CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE. BY SILAS HENN. London : Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

The author of this pamphlet sets himself to the establishing of three propositions. First : That the soul is not mere animal life, common alike to man and beast, but that it embraces the rational nature or the intellectual life. Secondly : That the spirit in man, whilst an emanation from the Divine Spirit, is not to be regarded simply as a portion of the Divine Spirit. Thirdly : That the spirit of man exists in a conscious state between death and the resurrection. The author, in his arguments, combats the work of Mr. Henry Constable, entitled "Hades,"—this work, however, we have not seen ;—and at the same time he adduces with much pertinence and point a large variety of Biblical passages to sustain his positions. The Author, in thought, spirit, and style, deserves all praise.

REGENERATION. By the late Rev. WILLIAM ANDERSON, LL.D. WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SKETCH OF REV. JOHN KER, D.D. London : Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

Many years ago, on its first appearance, we made ourselves acquainted with this work. We then formed a very high judgment of it ; and although since then our reading and thinking have been very considerable, our estimate is not much abated. There are few, if any, works on the subject that we consider superior to this. And although the theology of the book is too stiffly orthodox to accord with our views of Biblical teaching, and its explanation of the work of regeneration in the soul does not exactly satisfy our metaphysics, we can with the utmost confidence recommend the work. "It is,"—to use the language of Dr. Ker, in his able introductory sketch,—“a true book by a true man.”



A HOMILY

ON

Nehushtan; or, Means and Ends in our Spiritual Life.

"He [Hezekiah] . . . brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn in cense to it: and he called it Nehushtan."—2 KINGS xviii. 4.

THE temple at Jerusalem was the national museum of the Jews. It was fitting that it should be so, for the treasures of that God-governed nation were all of a sacred kind. Among the most prized of all the objects contained in that great sanctuary, there was one round which very interesting associations gathered, and which, for many reasons, the ancient people would be loath to lose. I refer to the brazen serpent, that image which belonged to the pilgrim-passage of their history, and which was connected with a very striking incident in the experience of their fathers. The fact that it was so long preserved, proves of itself that no slight feeling was entertained about it. One generation handed it down to another through several centuries. It might well have served the people of God as a KINDLY BEACON, warning

them against rebellious murmurings, and also as a FRIENDLY TOKEN, attesting the readiness and power of Jehovah to redeem them in the time of their calamity and distress. But between *what might have been* and *what was*, how wide and deep the gulf! That image of brass, instead of rendering an important spiritual service, became the occasion of idolatrous homage. Instead of leading the thoughts of men's minds *to* God, it drew them *from* Him; and instead of reverencing *Him*, they worshipped *it*. So the brave and wise king,—daring all reproach and rejecting all half-measures,—brake it up before the eyes of the people, and, in the act of destruction, called it “Nehushtan,” *i. e.*, a bit of brass. This he did that he might impress on their minds, by word as well as deed, that this image, which they had turned into an idol, was nothing but a piece of workmanship, made of man's hands, and to be unmade of him at his will. The principle which lies at the root of this somewhat daring and very decisive act, is this,—*that no good thing, however good it be, must be allowed to come between our souls and God, to rob Him of His service*; that, if anything does so come, a strong hand must be used, if need be, a *destructive* one,—to take it away: or, to put the truth in a more positive form, that whatever *means* we use for worship or instruction, must *not* be turned into an *end*, but must be resolutely and determinedly employed *as a means* to bring the mind into the presence of God's truth and the heart into communion with Himself.

To take the closest illustration we can find, let us suppose that the exploring expedition at work at Jerusalem should discover the *very* cross on which the Saviour hung, or the *very* spear which pierced His side; I do not hesitate to say that in such an event it would be a piece of wisdom and piety to break it and burn it, as its preservation would certainly draw away the thought and

trust of millions of souls from the Crucified One Himself to the mere instrument of His crucifixion, so doing vastly more harm than it could possibly do good.

In times like these, when the symbolic services of our pure and spiritual faith are made of so much account, when men are taught to rest in the outward ceremony instead of using it for a spiritual exercise, and are led to think that there is something really and inherently efficacious in consecrated elements, I think it is wise, if not necessary, to follow Hezekiah's example when he called the sacred image "a piece of brass," and, rejecting all sacerdotal terms, to speak simply of the *water* and the *bread* and the *wine*; and that it is needful to insist strenuously and earnestly that it is only as these outward and fleshly services bring our spirits into conscious contact with God and His truth, that they serve the purpose for which the Master meant them; and further, that it would be better that they should cease to be,—better that they should be broken up and laid aside,—than be continued as occasions of unintelligent, fleshly, and essentially idolatrous worship.

To whatever Church we belong, we stand in some danger. It is, indeed, hardly open to question that elaborate ritual and imposing ceremonies raise the peril to the highest point, while simple services reduce it to the lowest. But it is an infirmity of our nature: it is human rather than ecclesiastical. The tendency is in us all to rest in the material instead of rising above the visible means to the end for which they are designed. Wisdom prescribes the disuse of that which is more abused than used (as was the brazen serpent in the time of Hezekiah), and where disuse is impossible, a conscientious carefulness in the use.

Let us apply our principle to—

I. OUR TREATMENT OF THE BIBLE.

There is a sense in which we cannot speak of the Bible in too glowing terms. The terms in which we praise it in our speeches and our hymns are not extravagant,—

“’Tis a broad land of wealth unknown
Where springs of life arise,
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies.”

But *wherein resides its virtue?* There is nothing in the words which are employed more sacred than in those which are found in any book of devotion. There is no virtue or charm in the mere sound of the sentences which it contains. If we suppose,—as I verily believe many people do,—that we are any better for having a Bible on our shelves, or on our tables, or in our hands, *apart from the use we make of it*; or if we think that we are any better before God because we go regularly and perhaps slavishly through an allotted portion of it, casting our eyes over it, or uttering in regular sequence the sounds for which the letters stand, *whether or not we take its truth into our minds*, then are we making the same kind of mistake which the children of Israel made in burning incense to the brazen serpent: we are making an end of that which is only valuable as a means. As long as that image taught them of God and led their minds in grateful thought to *Him*, it did positive good; but so soon as it drew their thoughts to itself and led them to put any trust in *it*, immediately it came, injuriously and idolatrously, between them and God. If we attach a superstitious value to the book itself, because the will and word of God may be learned therefrom, if we suppose its presence in our homes or hands, or the taking of its words into our lips, or their being sounded in our ears, is, of itself, and in itself serviceable to us, we are ascribing a virtue and value to a thing which does not belong to it. We are putting our trust in an outward observance, we

are "having confidence in the flesh," we are assuring our hearts vainly, mistakenly, dangerously. A man might read the Bible all day long, and pay to it the utmost possible veneration; but if it excited no reverent thought of God in his mind, if it effected no change for the better in his spirit, if it stirred no feelings of love in his heart, if it furnished his mind with no helpful principles by which to regulate his life—of what service would it be to him? What good would it do? *None whatever.* And it might do this serious harm,—it might lead him to put a vain trust in a mere outward act, a mere fleshly ceremony, which, void as we are supposing it to be of spiritual feeling, would in the sight of God be of no more account than the bead-telling of the Romanist or the machinery-praying of the Indian. It is well to put it plainly to ourselves, that as the brazen serpent was, in itself, no more than a piece of brass, so the Bible is, to the man who reads it mechanically and unspiritually, no more than a mass of leather, paper and printer's ink. It will be of no positive service to us, except as, by its means, we become more familiar with the will of God and are drawn nearer in spirit to our Saviour. "We are the circumcision who . . . have no confidence in the flesh." The words Christ speaks to us are "spirit and life," or they are nothing. "The letter killeth, it is the spirit which quickeneth." Let us come to the Word of God, not in the spirit of a superstitious veneration, but in the spirit of intelligent devotion. Let us prize it, because, if we read it with the understanding and the heart in full exercise, we may have our minds illumined with God's own truth, our souls strengthened with renewed desires to be likeminded with our Lord, ourselves more fully penetrated with those holy principles and with that loving spirit by which our conduct and bearing toward our brother will be rightly regulated and harmoniously at-

tuned. Let us rejoice greatly in it because by the exercise of our spiritual faculties, aided by His Holy Spirit, we may know more of God from its teaching, and be drawn up into the very life which He is living.

This principle will apply to—

II. THE EMPLOYMENT OF APPROVED EVANGELICAL PHRASEOLOGY. Certain terms and phrases, either taken from the Scriptures or based upon them, were once in constant use in Evangelical addresses, which now are but rarely employed. Many are apprehensive that this is indicative of a departure from the old faith; it may simply be significant of the presence of new life. There is no virtue in any phrase, however true or scriptural it may be. There is danger, and may be even death, in a blind attachment and unreasoning commitment to a mere "form of sound words." It is so easy to run in the verbal ruts of pious phraseology, and fancy ourselves to be therefore in the way to heaven. It is so easy to take up the consecrated catchwords of Evangelical religion, and suppose ourselves to be, therefore, under the power of the truth. It is therefore a measure of practical Christian wisdom, not necessarily to cast aside as mischievous these old and good terms, but to use others with freedom and plentifulness; to put the truth of God which is to affect us into the most modern, living, common words we can find; to take it out of the livery of theological science, and clothe it in the dress of everyday life; in a word, to teach and speak the truth of the first century in the language and idiom of the nineteenth. This is true conservatism. The careful and scrupulous guarding of old forms, the embalming of honoured phrases, is a false method and perfectly futile. Let the old and everliving Gospel be uttered in the latest forms of speech, and it will live. And let men judge (test) themselves in this matter, that they be not

judged (condemned) at last. Are there not many in our churches who, because their lips have learnt to speak freely of the "grace of God," and the "blood of Christ," and the "work of the Spirit," fancy themselves possessed in very deed of the light of life and a title to the heavenly mansions? Are there not thousands who want to be warned in the plainest way, that Evangelical phrases on the lips are in themselves as powerless to save a soul as was that piece of brass which Hezekiah broke up before the Jews? It is the faith, the resting and trusting of the heart, in the one case as it was in the other, which "makes whole." All the Evangelical vocabulary gleaned from the Epistles, or caught up from all the Calvinistic divines, will not pass one soul through the gates of Paradise. They are only valuable as through them the soul comes unto and hides in the Saviour; thus used, they lead unto life eternal.

Of other means of grace and growth which God has given us, "we cannot now speak particularly;" but we insist on the application of this one leading principle to them all, viz., that they must be scrupulously and religiously held to their true use, preserved *as means to an end*, made tributary and serviceable to the growth of godliness in our hearts, and not rested in and built upon as being efficacious in and of themselves.

Much might be said of—

III. OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL. There will always be some danger of a regular Ministry sinking into a Priesthood. I say *sinking*, for there is a great *descent*, as well as *difference*, between the two. The *Priest* is the man who *acts for another with God*. The *Minister* is he who *helps another to come himself unto God*, in all holy and happy intercourse and relationship. Let us, ministers and people, take care that we keep our place—that is, that we do not *come down*

to take the lower place, which does not belong to the dispensation of the grace of God in which we stand. The Minister of Jesus Christ is before his people, not to *pray for them*, but to *help them to pray*; not to appear for them before God with sacerdotal favouritism, but to bring God's truth before their judgment, that they may accept it for themselves; to present God's love and righteousness to their souls, that they may be rightly affected by it; not to re-present the sacrifice of Calvary, offered "once for all," and "perfecting for ever them that are sanctified," but to go with them to God, and so to present His quickening truth, that they may become intelligent rejoicing worshippers, "dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of their life," "beholding the beauty of the Lord," and "set before His face for ever." If Christ's ambassador does not this, he does nothing; he does worse than nothing, for he probably comes between God and them, not to show them His word and lead them to Him, but to make them think they are the better with God, because they have been represented at His court by His special Minister; *and that trust is vain*; for God does not now ask for representative but personal spiritual devotion, and He will take nothing less. Every man must bear his own burden; every man must be a priest unto God; every man must draw nigh unto God,—must come unto Christ *himself*; and the one service that the Minister can render, and the highest he can conceivably render, is to *help him to come*. Christian men! have no confidence in the flesh, *in the human*; worship God in spirit: rejoice in Christ Jesus; and if you avail yourselves of a human instrumentality, as you will certainly need to do, see that the Ministry be made the instrument, the channel, the *means*,—that and nothing more, or rather nothing *less*,—the means by which you give yourselves anew to God and yield yourselves to Christ, a reasoning a spiritual sacrifice!

Open to a like abuse is—

IV. OUR PROFESSION OF PERSONAL PIETY. Only too often is this regarded as the attainment of an end, rather than the employment of a means of good. Men are apt, having reached that stage, to settle down into a slumberous state of spiritual complacency, instead of feeling that, by taking this step, they have entered into a wider realm of privilege and opportunity, where their noblest powers may engage in fullest exercise. It becomes a haven of indolent and treacherous security, instead of a sanctuary for intelligent devotion, a field for active Christian work, and thus it is perverted from a blessing to a bane.

It is well for us all occasionally to arrest ourselves in our routine of devotion and religious activity, and to ask ourselves what use we are making of the various means we are employing. Sacred days and sacred places, sacred words and sacred acts, are of no account whatever, except we so use them that we ourselves rise, through them, to understand the truth, to hold intercourse with God, and to consecrate ourselves afresh to the service of our Saviour. To rest in rites, however simple, to stop spiritually at services, however scriptural, is to miss the mark, to catch at the shadow, to hold the husk from which the kernel is departed. And when the soul satisfies itself with this, it is sure to pine if it does not perish. It is wise to disuse that which has lost its true significance, while, in regard to that with which no man can dispense,—the word of God, the ministry, the sanctuary,—let us remember that between a servile and fleshly submission on the one hand, and a discerning and spiritual use on the other hand, there is all the distance between fatal folly and heavenly wisdom.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this TEHELIM, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) ANNOTATIONS of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is among the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: An Old Sermon on a Subject ever New.

(Continued from page 13.)

HOMILETICS :—This psalm may be regarded as an old *sermon on a subject ever new*, and in this aspect it throws itself into four divisions, viz., the subject of this old sermon, the hearers of this old sermon, the preacher of this old sermon, the arguments of this old sermon.

I. The SUBJECT of this old sermon. What is the subject? It is expressed in the fifth and sixteenth verses, “Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?” “Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house shall be increased.”

The leading idea is, that the good man has no great reason for fearing any evil that the richest worldly man can afflict on him. Two facts are included in the doctrine. First: *That wicked men here do often become very rich.* This has always been the case; on this very day, throughout Christendom and throughout the world, the great bulk of wealth is in the hand of the wicked. The most prosperous farmers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, manufacturers, are, in the majority of cases, men

destitute of moral goodness. The fact admits of easy explanation (1) Worldly prosperity with the wicked is their "one thing." It is what they estimate the chief good, and to their chief good they concentrate all the fires and forces of their nature. The man who selects one thing, and says, "This one thing I do," will in all probability distinguish himself in that pursuit. Wealth is the one thing of worldly men : this is their *summum bonum*, it kindles their enthusiasm, engrosses their energy, and commands their time. It is the goal in their life-race, towards which they bend all the energy of their being. Money to them is everything ; they labour for it, and verily they have their reward. Now a good man does not do this, cannot do this ; worldly wealth to him is a subordinate thing. The eyes of his soul are not fixed on those things that are seen and temporal ; he lays up for himself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

(2) The conditions by which worldly wealth is attained are often such that a good man revolts from and disobeys. Fraud, falsehood, sharp practice, enthusiastic devotion, are often required ; and as a rule, these are the successful pathways to fortune. A man who is bent on making a fortune will often have to say to his conscience what Abraham said to his ass, "Tarry here while I go yonder"—yonder in the path of commercial pursuits. Wonder not then that wicked men are and ever have been amongst the wealthiest men. As a rule, man has in this life what he goes in for ; he who goes in for wealth may have it. Secondly: *That wicked men often so employ their wealth as to terrify the good.* Hence the self-admonition, "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased." Wealth makes unprincipled men haughty, heartless, oppressive, cruel. Persecutions, martyrdoms, have in all ages been instigated, sanctioned, and enforced by affluent wickedness. The subject of this old psalm, then, is neither obsolete nor local ; it is as true to-day as ever, as real here in England as in any other part of the world. Gold is against goodness ; albeit goodness should not be alarmed, it should be calm and heroic. "Be not thou afraid when one is made

rich." There is no just reason for this. Thou hast, if godly, conscience with thee, the universal Church with thee, the eternal laws of the world with thee, God with thee. "Be not thou afraid," "All things work together for good," etc.

II. The HEARERS of this old sermon. What was the congregation to which this old sermon was addressed? For whom was it composed? The first two verses answer the question, "Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor together," "All ye people, people of every clime, land, tongue." "All ye inhabitants of the world," whatever they are, on whatever zone of the globe; whatever they are, whatever their physical conformation, their mental attributes, or spiritual character. "Low and high, rich and poor." The occupants of thrones and the tenants of huts—the most opulent and the most indigent. The subject is a human one; it concerns all men, it appeals to all men, it demands the attention of all men. The doctrine that good men should not dread the power of wealth, is not a doctrine of temporal expediency or local politics; it is universal. First: All men *have a tendency* to crouch before wealth. See the thousands on Lord Mayor's day, or the public manifestations of royalty, waving their hats and shouting with tremulous voices their hurrahs to wealth. The man is overawed in the presence of the little glittering nabob. A sad fact this in human nature; but a fact it is! Secondly: All men are *degraded* in crouching before wealth. The man who in any way renders homage to worldly riches, injures his moral nature. Why, in our England to-day, is there confessedly less public spirit, less practical sympathy with the right for the right's sake, less of the self-denying in spirit, the morally heroic, than in any previous time? The chief if not the sole cause, is the degrading influence of wealth upon the common mind. The English mind has grown mercenary, servile, grovelling, and grubby. Money has weakened our manhood, despoiled it to a great extent of its independency and chivalry. Let then all the "inhabitants of the world" attend to the great doctrine of this psalm.

III. THE PREACHER of this old sermon. Who is the preacher? Though we are not certain as to his name or personal history, we have here some light concerning his mind and mission. "My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline mine ear to a parable: I will open my dark saying upon the harp." Taking this account of himself as correct, we learn that he was wise, thoughtful, devout, and cheerful.

First: He was *wise*. "My mouth shall speak of wisdom." When a preacher, as he stands up before his audience, has a consciousness that he has wisdom, he has the best qualification for the delivery of a good discourse. Feeling that he has the true thing to say, he says it in the best way and in the best spirit. Human souls are made to receive wisdom, they open to it as flowers to the sun; and he who can impart it may well expect a listening ready and hearty. The man who can stand up before his congregation with a strong inward assurance that he has Divine wisdom to impart, is invested with a power which will enable him to work most beneficent results even in the process of his discourse.

Secondly: He was *thoughtful*. "The meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." There are two classes of spurious preachers. (1) Those who do not think at all. Either from the lack of capacity or disposition, they have no thought within them of any substance or worth. They speak only the crude things which the memory of their ill-stored minds throws up under the excitement of the hour. Albeit they speak not the less fluently and loudly on this account, for the shallow stream often runs more rapidly than deep rivers; and from empty barrels you can send forth more noise than from those that are full to the brim. (2) Those who think on worthless subjects. Not a few preachers who think, think only on hoary dogmas and the miserable *isms* of their little sect. Now, in contradistinction to both these classes, the preacher before us not only thought, but thought on true subjects. "The meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." The great Teacher of all teachers—God—pours know-

ledge into no mind irrespective of the free and honest use of its faculties. If you are to get light from heaven, the "meditation" of your heart must be of "understanding."

Thirdly : He was *devout*. "I will incline mine ear to a parable." As the lyrist bends his ear to the sounds of the harp he is preparing for music, so the soul of the true preacher inclines its ear to the eternal voices of truth. Divine wisdom crieth aloud everywhere, but her voice is heard only by the listening ones. He only gets prepared to preach who, like young Samuel, stands in a waiting attitude of soul, exclaiming, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Fourthly : He was *cheerful*. "I will open my dark saying upon the harp." He felt that his subject was somewhat enigmatic and mysterious, but it did not depress him. Nor would he speak it with a saddened heart, or in sepulchral tones. If mystery is to sadden, no creature mind can be happy, for mystery pervades all things : the universe floats on it as on a dark and fathomless tide. The preacher before us seems happy although the subject of his discourse involved riddles and enigmas. Hence he wished to have the whole set to music, "I will open my dark saying upon the harp." Blessed is the state of that preacher's soul who can set providential mysteries and theological difficulties to music.

IV. The ARGUMENTS of this old sermon. The grand subject of this old sermon, as we have seen, is, that the good man has no just reason for fearing any evil that the richest worldly man can inflict on him. The arguments he employs to sustain and illustrate this are numerous and striking. We will state them in the fewest possible words.

First : The *impotency and transitoriness of wealth*. What can wealth do ? It cannot *deliver from the grave*. "They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him," etc. Can wealth procure the elixir of immortality ? No. Can all the wealth of the world deliver even one man from the power of the grave ? No. Could it have done so, kingdoms would have been

bartered away for a few hours. The redemption of life is too "precious," and wealth "ceaseth for ever" to effect it; it has tried millions of times but never has succeeded. Death can gain as easy an access to a monarch's palace as to a peasant's hut: "there is no discharge in that war." Then how transitory too! "Wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others." Not only is the wealth of the richest man utterly incapable to deliver him from the grave, but it passes from him into the hands "of others." His houses, lands, title deeds, gold, parks, equipages, all pass from him: others have them. "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him."

Secondly: The *in corrigibility and miserable end of the affluent wicked*. Look at their folly. "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish." Their "inward thought," the thought that lies behind all their other thoughts, has to do with wealth.* What a foolish thought this inward thought is! And yet it cannot be reasoned away, with all your argumentation it remains a highly central force in the worldling's avaricious soul. Verily this their way is their folly. What makes the matter worse is, that this inward thought is transmitted. Those who follow act in the same way, "their posterity approve their sayings;" thus from generation to generation the folly goes on.

Thirdly: The *wretched end of the affluent wicked, as contrasted with the end of the morally good*. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling." "He shall go to the generation of his fathers: they shall never see

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ix., p. 244.

light. Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is 'like the beasts that perish.' "Like sheep" in what respect? Not in their innocency in life, but in their impotence in death. In life perhaps they were like prowling lions, but in death harmless as sheep; and corruption will deal with them as sheep. "Death shall feed on them."

"Even as a flock arrayed are they
For the dark grave,
Death guides their way."—*Wordsworth.*

Not only are their bodies corrupted, but their beauty and glory consumed. There lie the bones of the proud monarch who in life fancied himself a little god, his ashes mingling with the dust of those whom he treated with cruelty and contempt. He shall carry nothing away. "Life," said old Thomas Adams, "is like the banks of a river, his temporal estate is the stream; time will moulder away the banks, but the stream stays not for that, it glides away continually. Life is the tree, riches are the fruit, or rather the leaves; the leaves will fall, the fruit is plucked, and yet the tree stands. Some write of the pine-tree, that if the bark be pulled off, it lasts long; being on, it rots. If the worldling's bark were stripped off, he might perhaps live the longer; there is great hope he would live the better."

In contrast with all this, mark the end of the upright man. "The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning." "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." What meaneth this? If it points not to the resurrection, it has still a significance. Though a good man must die, death does not conquer him. He dies willingly, bravely, often exultingly, feeling that death is a mere transit to the skies. Death is his deliverer, not his destroyer; his morning, not his night; his minister, not his master. Now the conclusion from all these considerations that the preacher draws, is, "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich."

CONCLUSION: Verily this old sermon, with its universal subjects, great congregation, noble preacher, and impressive arguments, is well worth our study.

"Thus did a choking wanderer in the desert cry,
'Oh that Allah one prayer would grant before I die;
That I might stand up to my knees in a cool lake,
My burning tongue and parching throat in it to slake.'

"No lake he saw, and when they found him in the waste,
A bag of gems and gold lay just before his face;
And his dead hand a paper with this writing grasped,
'Worthless was wealth when dying for water I grasped.'

"Be diadem or helmet on thy head,
It must be arrow-pierced and thou be dead;
Then every man whose mind is wisdom stocked,
Will strive to have his wealth in heaven locked."

Oriental, translated by W. Alger.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but, our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: Great Crimes not always followed by Great Punishment in this Life.

"Why, seeing times are not hidden," etc.—JOB xxiv. 1-25.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 1—"Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not see His days?" There are various translations of this verse. That of Dr. Bernard seems to us the best. "Why is it thus? Events are not hidden from the Almighty, yet they that love Him do not see His days." Since all events are confessedly known to the Almighty, why is it that those who know Him see not His days of retribution upon the wicked?

Ver. 2.—“*Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.*” Job now proceeds to specify some of the flagrant crimes that were perpetrated by men on whom no judgment came. Here is an old form of dishonesty. By changing the landmarks, they decreased their neighbour's lands and increased their own. They tempted the herds or the flocks into their own fold.

Ver. 3.—“*They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.*” They rob the widow and the orphan by taking away the ox and the ass.

Ver. 4.—“*They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.*” They oppress the poor to such an extent that they dare not show themselves in the street.

Ver. 5.—“*Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.*” Like wild asses, which are never seen but in the desert, where they seek for pasture, so the poor whom they oppress, not being suffered to abide in the villages and towns, must work in the desert for food for themselves and their children.

Ver. 6.—“*They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.*” They break in upon the fields of others, and feed upon their grain, instead of cultivating their fields for themselves.

Ver. 7, 8.—“*They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.*” They deprive the poor of their clothing, so that they are left naked, shivering in the cold nights, seeking shelter only in the crevices of the rocks.

Ver. 9, 10.—“*They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry.*” They steal unprotected children and sell them into slavery, and take the very bread out of the mouth of the poor.

Ver. 11.—“*Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst.*” They press out oil within their (the wicked men's) walls; they tread their winepresses, and yet suffer thirst.”—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 12.—“*Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out.*” Having described the crimes which the wicked perpetrated on the poor in the rural districts, he proceeds to notice the enormities committed in the city. In the city men are groaning under the oppressions of the wicked. “*Yet God layeth not folly to them,*” i.e., God does not punish them.

Ver. 13, 14.—“*They are of those that rebel against the light: they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.*” Job now divides the wicked into two classes, the one composed of

such hardened villains as are bold enough to commit the most horrible crimes in broad daylight ; the other, of those who, being too cowardly for this, dare not face the light, but sneak away to their dens at its approach. He says, some of them are among those who rebel against the light. That is, who, as it were, bid defiance to the light, and ply their horrible trade in the middle of the day. Others again there are who do not know its ways nor abide in its paths, who are so much afraid of the light as to avoid it altogether. The murderer riseth with the daylight. Not because he dreads the full light of the sun, but so as to have all the day before him. And killeth the poor and needy. He is quite indifferent to the sun's shining upon his murderous deeds. But in the night he is again as though he were a thief. Though in the daytime he displays more boldness than those sneaking cowards who only venture to carry on their depredations under the cover of deep darkness, yet he is not ashamed to imitate them. His greediness is so great as to induce him to stoop to thieving in the night."

—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 15.—“*The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.*” The adulterer is ever a sneak and a coward.

Ver. 16.—“*In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light.*” Here is a description of a burglar. He hides himself in the day, and goes forth in the night to dig into the houses and to plunder them.

Ver. 17.—“ *For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.*” The meaning is, that they are familiar with the blackest night and dread it not; but daylight, which may reveal them, they dread.

Ver. 18—“*He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.*” The point of comparison here is the swiftness of the disappearing criminal. He is carried quickly past as any light substance on the surface of the water. He is hurried along with the swiftness of the current, and can scarcely be seen. “It is not,” says Barnes, “uncommon to describe one who is about to commit crime in the night as moving noiselessly along—as taking the utmost precaution that silence should be preserved.” So Macbeth, when about to commit murder, soliloquizes:—

"Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead . . .
 and withered murder,
Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, toward his design
Moves like a ghost.—'Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
Thy very stones prate of my where-about."

Ver. 19.—“*Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned.*” Job means to say, that gently as the sun melts the snow, death bears away those criminals. The afflictions they deserve do not attend their dying hours.

Ver. 20.—“*The womb shall forget him: the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.*” The idea is here further expressed, that no terrible calamity as a rule attends the great criminal’s death. He fades away even from the memory of his mother; and the worm feeds sweetly on him as on all men. Nor will he be remembered generally as a great criminal.

Ver. 21.—“*He evil entreateth the barren that beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.*” The oppressor is here again expressed. Whilst he renders no service to the widow, he is a curse to the barren woman who has no children to comfort her.

Ver. 22.—“*He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no man is sure of life.*” He, that is God, prolongeth the life of the wicked. He raises him up from suffering, even after his life had been despaired of.

Ver. 23.—“*Though it be given him to be in safety, whercon he resteth: yet His eyes are upon their ways.*” “He giveth him rest, and he is sustained, and His eyes are over their ways.”—*Delitzsch*. Job’s idea seems to be, that God, instead of punishing those criminals, blesses them so far as this life is concerned.

Ver. 24.—“*They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low: they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.*” This was the proposition which Job maintained. His friends affirmed that the wicked were punished in this world, and that great crimes would meet with great calamities. This Job denies, and says that on the contrary the wicked were exalted, although only for a “little while.”

Ver. 25.—“*And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?*” “This is a challenge to any one to prove the contrary to what he had said. Job had now attacked their main position, and had appealed to facts in defence of what he held. He maintained that, as a matter of fact, the wicked were prospered, that they often lived to old age, and that they then died a peaceful death without any direct demonstration of the divine displeasure. He boldly appeals to any one to deny this, or to prove the contrary. The appeal was decisive. The fact was undeniable, and the controversy was closed.”—*Barnes*.

HOMILETICS.—The chapter brings under our notice two facts.

I. THAT GREAT CRIMES HAVE PREVAILED ON THE EARTH FROM EARLIEST TIMES. Amongst the crimes specified in this chapter

there is (1) *theft*. There were those who stole from others their lands and flocks, and robbed the widow and orphan of their food and clothing (verses 2 to 8). There is (2) *cruelty*. "They plucked the fatherless from the breast," made "men groan out of the city." There is (3) *murder*. "The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy." There is (4) *adultery*. "The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight," etc. These are amongst the blackest crimes found on the world's long roll of depravity. The fact that these crimes prevailed in Job's land and times implies,—

First: That in those distant scenes and times *the same standard of morals existed that we have*. They esteemed theft, cruelty, murder, and adultery wrong; so do we. Their law condemned these things; so does ours. It is the law written on all hearts, republished in the Decalogue, and exemplified in Christ.

Secondly: That in those distant scenes and times *men had the same sinful propensities as they have now*. The principles that prompted Job's contemporaries and countrymen to perpetrate those crimes live and work in all unregenerate hearts to this day. Dishonesty, cruelty, lust, where are they? Everywhere. The chapter brings under notice another fact:—

II. THAT ALTHOUGH THE GREAT GOD IS COGNIZANT OF THOSE CRIMES HE DOES NOT ALWAYS VISIT THEM WITH PUNISHMENT IN THIS LIFE. Job begins with the question, "Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not see His days?"

The meaning is, Why, since crimes are not hidden from the Almighty, do not His friends see His judgments? He shows that these great criminals fare as well here, both in life and death, as others. They have a peaceful death, pass quietly away, as the snow melts in the sunbeam. When they are gone the memory of their crime gradually fades away even from the mind of the mother. In fact they are often prosperous in life and peaceful in death, they have no bands in their death. Why is this? Not because the Almighty is ignorant of their crimes, or because their crimes are not abhorrent to His nature. Whatever the cause, the fact is undeniable; and this fact Job

brings out here to refute the doctrine of his friends, viz., that great suffering implies great crime.

To this Eliphaz and Zophar make no further reply, they are silent. Bildad only, in the next chapter, makes one more feeble effort.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are :—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard ; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee ; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner ; Lange ; etc., etc.

Subject: The Woman taken in Adultery.

"And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine

accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”—JOHN viii. 3-11.

EXPOSITION.—On the question of the genuineness of this paragraph we cannot do better than by presenting our readers with a summary of the arguments as given by Dr. Farrar: “I. ARGUMENTS AGAINST ITS GENUINENESS.—(1) It is not found in some of the best and oldest MSS.; (2) nor in most of the Fathers (*e.g.*, Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Tertullian, Cyprian); (3) nor in many ancient versions (*e.g.*, Sahidic, Coptic, and Gothic); (4) in other MSS. it is marked with *obeli* and asterisks, or a space is left for it, or it is inserted elsewhere; (5) it contains an extraordinary number of various readings (*‘variant singula fere verba in codicibus plerisque.’*—*Tischendorf*); (6) it contains several expressions not elsewhere found in St. John; and (7) it differs widely in some respects,—particularly in the constant use of the connecting *et*,—from the style of St. John throughout the rest of the Gospel. Several of these arguments are weakened, (1) by the fact that the diversities of readings may be reduced to three main recensions; (ii.) that the rejection of the passage may have been due to a false dogmatical bias; (iii.) that the silence of some of the Fathers may be accidental, and of others prudential. II. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF ITS GENUINENESS.—(1) It is found in some old and important uncials, and in more than 300 cursive MSS., and in some of the Itala, and in the Vulgate; (2) The tendencies which led to its deliberate rejection would have rendered all but impossible its invention or interpolation; (3) It is quoted by Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, and treated as genuine in the Apostolic Constitutions. St. Jerome’s testimony is particularly important, because he says that in his time it was found *‘in multis et Græcis et Latinis codicibus,’* and it must be remembered that nearly all of these must have been considerably older than any which we now possess. The main facts to be observed are, that though the dogmatic bias against the passage might be sufficient to account for its rejection, it gives us no help in explaining its want of resemblance to the style of St. John. A very simple hypothesis will account for all difficulties. If we suppose that the story of the woman accused before our Lord of many sins,—to which Eusebius alludes as existing in the Gospel of the Hebrews,—is identical with this, we may suppose without any improbability, either (i.) that St. John (as Alford hesitatingly suggests) may here have adopted a portion of current synoptic tradition, or (ii.) that the story may have been derived originally from Papias, the pupil of St. John, and having found its way into the Gospel of the Hebrews, may have been adopted gradually into some MSS. of St. John’s Gospel. Many recent writers adopt the suggestion of Holtzmann, that it belongs to the *‘Ur-marcus,’* or ground doctrine of the Synoptists. Whoever embodied into the

Gospels this traditionally remembered story deserved well of the world." *

Ver. 3.—"*And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst.*" These scribes and Pharisees had tried to entrap Him before, but were foiled. A death penalty was involved in the act here charged against the woman. We may therefore suppose that the Sanhedrim moved now in the matter.

Ver. 4.—"*They say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*" Alford's reading of this verse is as follows: "The priests say unto Him, tempting Him that they might have to accuse Him, Master, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act."

Ver. 5.—"*Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?*" *ὁὖ οὖν τι λίζεις*, "What now sayest Thou?"

Ver. 6.—"*This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him.*" That is, putting Him to a test in order to have ground for accusation against Him. They thought that their question was such that, whatever answer He gave, He would involve Himself in guilt. If He said, "Stone her," they would charge Him with assuming a political authority that did not belong to Him. If He said, "Let her alone, do nothing with her," they would charge Him with encouraging immorality and abrogating their law. "*But Jesus stooped down,*"—He was in a sitting posture before,—"*and with His finger wrote on the ground.*" This gesture was familiar to antiquity as a representation of deep thinking, languor, or absence of mind (see the representation in Lücke, page 269). Perhaps by the act Christ meant to express disregard of their question. "*As though He heard them not.*" This clause is not in the original, it is supplied by our translators. It should be struck out, as it conveys the idea that Christ meant to deceive.

Ver. 7.—"*So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*" "Without sin." Without this sin, in spirit, if not in act; and whose conscience acquits him of any such sin, let him cast the first stone. Thus He turns the tables upon them. Under the law (Deut. xvii. 7) the stone in such a case was to be hurled by the witnesses of the guilt; and this in order that they might feel the responsibility of giving evidence.

Ver. 8.—"*And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground.*" What wrote He? No one knows. Did He stoop and write merely to give the accusers of this woman an opportunity to slink away unobserved? Probably so. Anyhow they availed themselves of the occasion.

* See "Life of Christ," by Dr. Farrar, vol. ii., p. 62.

Ver. 9.—“*And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one.*” It is historically stated that at this time many prominent Rabbis were living in adultery, hence the words of Christ caused them to be convicted by their own conscience. “*Beginning at the eldest,*” or rather at the elders in the official sense, and not the seniors in age. One by one they slunk away. They did not dare to wait until Christ rose from His bent attitude and looked lightning and spoke thunder to them. “*And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*” Only the band of accusers ran away, the disciples and the people probably remained and were looking on. Why did not the accused run away? Christ had His grasp upon her conscience, she felt chained to His judgment-seat.

Ver. 10, 11.—“*When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.*” “What inimitable tenderness and grace! Conscious of her own guilt, and till now in the hands of men who had talked of stoning her, wondering at the skill with which her accusers had been dispersed, and the grace of the few words addressed to herself, she would be disposed to listen, with a reverence and teachableness before unknown, to our Lord’s admonition. Jesus pronounces no pardon upon the woman, like ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee,’ ‘Go in peace,’ much less does He say that she had done nothing condemnable. He simply leaves the matter where it was. He meddles not with the magistrate’s office, nor acts the judge in any sense. But in saying ‘Go, and sin no more,’ which had been before said to one who undoubtedly believed (chap. v. 14), more is probably implied than expressed. If brought suddenly to conviction of sin, to admiration of her Deliverer, and to a willingness to be admonished and guided by Him, this call to begin a new life may have carried with it what would ensure and naturally bring about a permanent change.”—*Dr. Brown.*

HOMILETICS.—Amongst the thoughts which this wonderful narrative suggests, there are three worthy of notice, which are true whether the narrative is genuine or not.

I. That the VILEST SINNERS ARE OFTEN THE GREATEST ACCUSERS. Were there a worse lot of men in Judea or on the round earth than these scribes and Pharisees, and members of the Sanhedrim, who now accused this woman? It is ever so: the more base and corrupt a man is, the more ready to charge crimes on others, and the more severe in his censures.

II. That the SEVEREST JUDGE OF SINNERS IS THEIR OWN CONSCIENCE. “They which heard Him, being convicted by

their own conscience, went out one by one." Observe two things—

First: Christ's *method of awakening their conscience*. (1) He expresses by a symbolical act His superiority over their malignant purposes. He stoops down as if He were utterly indifferent. (2) He puts the question of the woman's punishment upon their *own* consciences. "He that is without sin," etc. Observe—

Secondly: *The force of their awakened consciences*. They were convicted, and went out one by one. Ah! there is no judge so severe and crushing in his sentence as that of a guilty conscience.

III. That THE GREATEST FRIEND OF SINNERS IS JESUS CHRIST. The accusers are gone, but the accused remains with Jesus alone. Observe—

First: *He declines pronouncing a judicial condemnation upon her*. "Neither do I condemn thee." He does not mean that He did not disapprove of her conduct and condemn her *morally*, but *judicially*. He declines to pronounce judgment. Observe—

Secondly: *He discharges her with a merciful admonition*. "Go, and sin no more." An expression, this, implying (1) That she had sinned. Adultery is a terrible moral crime. (2) That he forgave her. "Go." I absolve thee. (3) That her future should be free from sin. "Sin no more." Let bygones be bygones; let oblivion cover thy past; let virtue crown thy future. Thus Jesus deals with sinners. Desolate, branded, forsaken of all, He alone will stand by thee.*

A COLD PREACHER.—His admired discourses remind me of the coloured shavings with which we fill empty grates in the summer time. But to understand my comparison fully, you must suppose that it is not summer with you, but keenly practical winter weather, and that you enter a room seeking a fire, and find, not a fire but only a grate, and in that grate coloured shavings!—*Lynch*.

* For an amplification of these thoughts, see *Homilist*, Series III., vol. ix., page 166.

Germs of Thought.

Subject : Heaven's Hallelujah Chorus.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty ; just and true are thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name ? for thou only art holy," etc.—REV. xv. 3, 4.

MODERN science is largely engaged in speculating upon man's physical genesis—about man as he *was* ; while the Old Testament Scriptures settle those points satisfactorily to most devout minds, and the New Testament speaks fully and clearly of what man *is to be*. The Apocalypse of St. John is to show us, among many other things, *the final triumph of goodness in the universe of God*, and the final and full glorification of the nature of man. Like streaks of morning cloud we shall *not* melt away into the infinite azure of the past. Paradise *was* lost, but Paradise *has been* regained ; and in the end immortal love shall triumph over all evil, and God shall be all in all. We come to notice the song of the harpers on the glassy sea, and will indicate in outline the subjects which enter into this song of Moses and the Lamb. The song is addressed to God, and may be called the great *Hallelujah Chorus of heaven*, for what God is in *Himself* in His works and in His ways. We have then—

I. HEAVEN'S HALLELUJAH CHORUS TO GOD, FOR WHAT HE IS IN HIMSELF. The harpers praise God for (a) *His holiness*. "For Thou only art holy : " only God is absolutely holy. To convey to our minds an idea of God's spotless holiness, we are told that the heavens are not clean in His sight, and that He charges even the angels with folly. All the holiness,—as all the happiness in the universe,—is derived from Him, as its *sole* eternal spring. God is *Holy Love*. On earth, vice and wrong are often praised and crowned ; but in heaven, holiness is crowned and adored. Let us endeavour to antedate the coronation now,—

‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty !
 Gratefully adoring, our songs would rise to Thee.
 Only Thou art holy, merciful, and mighty,
 God in Three Persons, Blessed Trinity.”

The harpers praise God for (β) *His worthiness*. “Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy name?” God will not be adored because He demands adoration, He will not be revered because He has struck terror into the hearts of His foes. The worship of heaven will be *voluntary* worship, the worship of love and free will. The fear with which the heavenly hosts will sing, will be a *filial* and not a slavish fear. The name of the Lord shall be exalted above every name, His new best name of Love ! God shall be seen as not only the greatest, but as the *best* and the most glorious of beings.

II. HEAVEN’S HALLELUJAH CHORUS TO GOD FOR WHAT HE IS IN HIS WORKS. “Great and marvellous are Thy works.” (α) “*Great*.” The world of nature, revealed to our naked eye, impresses us with the stupendousness of the works of God, great in wisdom, goodness, and power. But when we avail ourselves of the aid of the telescope and microscope, new worlds are revealed to us, and the greatness of the works of God overwhelms us. What must it be to witness in heaven, —with the capacities of the soul enlarged,—the *magnitude* and *multitude* of the works of God in addition to what can be seen on earth ! If the works of the Lord on earth, which is but His footstool, are so great, what must His works be in heaven, which is His throne ! The harpers acknowledge that God’s works are (β) “*marvellous*.” Moses told of the work of *Creation* ; the Lamb, of the work of *Redemption* ; and the wonders connected with each are blended together in the chorus of the sky. In the natural government and moral government of God there are *similar* mysteries and wonders. Creation and Redemption are both marvellous, for their author is the same infinite and eternal Lord. Wonder will mingle with the worship of the sky, as it mingles with the worship of earth. The finite can never fully comprehend the infinite, for

“A God alone can comprehend a God,”

The themes of Creation and Redemption,—the song of Moses and the Lamb,—will never be exhausted, never worn out ; the harpers on the glassy sea will sing their Hallelujah Chorus, and *it* will never become *tame*, and *they* will never become *tired*. The works of God will appear *increasingly* great and marvellous for ever and for ever.

III. HEAVEN'S HALLELUJAH CHORUS TO GOD FOR WHAT HE IS IN HIS WAYS. “Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints,” (a) “*Just.*” The saints on earth believe that the ways of God are just ; but here we know only in part, and often the ways of God *seem* to us very mysterious. To our limited sight there often appear strange discrepancies and anomalies in the providence of the Most High. It is easy to be satisfied and settled in our faith while we shut our eyes and ears to everything but what is on our side ; but when with *inquiring* minds we reflect upon the natural and moral phenomena around and within us, and *reason* upon sin, and sorrow, and death, we want some window out of which we can look from the present, some door out of which we can go for relief ;—and, here, *heaven* comes to our relief, and we learn that when the day of Eternity shall dawn upon the night of Time the mysteries of earth shall be cleared up, and all the ways of God shall be declared,—and seen to be,—“*just.*” In this world we hear the tuning of the instruments for the heavenly concert, we see but little bits of the great and sublime drama of Time ; in the *end* it will be seen, that all the ways of God,—in what He *permitted*, and in what He *prevented*, and in what He *purposed*,—*all* were just, all for the happiness, and especially the *holiness*, of man, and the glory of His holy name. And then the harpers praise God because His ways are (β) “*True.*” From the beginning God has never falsified His word, has never broken His promise. The promise that the seasons should not cease to revolve in their annual round ; the promise that in the fulness of time the great Deliverer should come ; the promise that the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and that all flesh should see it together ; the promise that death should be swallowed up in victory, and

that all the holy and good should be for ever with the Lord—all fulfilled ; and the harpers praise the Lord, not only that He is “just,” but that He is “*true*.”

Certainly, then, with respect to the tragedy of Time, the end thereof shall be better and brighter than the beginning ! Evil shall not always reign,—the time shall come when it shall be seen, and joyfully proclaimed, that *goodness has triumphed in the universe of God* ! The end of this tremendous, and as yet uninterpreted, riddle of life shall show that the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of man is *Love* ! If I can only hope and believe that, when I have solved the mystery of death, I shall join the harpers of the glassy sea, and unite in the Hallelujah Chorus of the text, I can *work and wait, serve and suffer* ; I am content. It shall then be seen “that the cries and sobs of mortality are but as one faint jarring note in an eternity of song.” The song of Moses and the Lamb gathers up the *two dispensations*, and *all time*. The Jewish and Christian Churches *one* in heaven ! Believers,—from every quarter of the world, and of all time,—met together in one happy home, and uniting in one triumphant song.

We must learn the chorus *here*. Have our souls tuned *here*. We must believe in Moses and the Lamb, in the truths they taught. Our *lips* and our *lives* must praise God in the Church *Militant* ; then, hereafter, we shall sing the great Hallelujah Chorus in the Church *Triumphant*.

Bristol.

F. W. BROWN.

Subject: Investigation the Way to Faith.

“Come and see.”—JOHN i. 39, 46.

THIS invitation, falling first from the gracious lips of our Saviour, and afterwards echoed by one of His earliest disciples, at once suggests and illustrates much teaching about personal search into the verities of our holy religion ; in other words, about individual investigation into the reality of Christianity. We are reminded of much that belongs to such investigation in its varied developments.

I. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH HIS EARLY FOLLOWERS GAINED FAITH IN CHRIST'S MISSION. The two young men whose attention had been directed to the Great Teacher of Nazareth, are invited by Him to go to His dwelling, or rather His temporary resting place; for home on earth He had none. And they spent many hours, probably the whole night, with Him, coming away with the clear deep conviction that shaped all their future, "We have found the Messiah." He had nothing to conceal. The more they knew of Him, the clearer would His glories shine. In this He was at once a *contrast* to most of the would-be heroes of the world, and an *example* to all who would be its teachers.

II. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH STUDENTS OF HIS BIOGRAPHY GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST'S CHARACTER. We have in the records of the four Evangelists, and in the sermons and letters of the Apostles, abundant material for the most thorough and exhaustive acquaintance with our Lord's character. A right investigation will prove it to be (1) *original*, (2) *beautiful*, (3) *perfect*.

III. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH STUDENTS OF HISTORY GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST'S INFLUENCE. The true readers of history will find on its pages "a series of majestic facts," that will testify (1) to the *mightiness*, (2) to the *beneficialness*, of Christ's influence in the world.

IV. THE INVESTIGATION BY WHICH INQUIRERS FOR PERSONAL SALVATION GAIN FAITH IN CHRIST HIMSELF. Personal salvation is effected by a practical faith in a Personal Christ. Not by a merely theoretic faith even in Him, nor even by an energetic faith in teachings about Him; but in such a vitalizing faith in Himself as involves love to the Lord, reveals hatred of the sin from which He redeems, care for the race He represents, imitation of the goodness He incarnated. This faith can only be possessed by those who hold (1) *intelligent*, (2) *devout*, (3) *constant* communion with Him. We must not judge only by the testimony of others, nor even by the assertions of Scripture. "Believe, and thou shalt be saved." If you would know whether Jesus Christ can deliver from the power

of sin, whether He can console in trouble, whether He can strengthen for duty, whether He can protect in temptation, whether He can guide in perplexity, "Come and see." "O taste and see that the Lord is gracious."

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Subject: Precious Seeds.

"Light is sown for the righteous."—PSALM xcvi. 11.

IN dwelling upon these words I shall notice

I. The SEED, "light."

The preciousness of this figure is seen as we reflect (1) upon the quality of the seed, "light." "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." That which dispels mists and shadows, and reveals realities, is the *seed*. (2) In the idea of increase involved in the fact, "light is sown;" and (3) In the amount of this precious seed that is sown. Through the entire field of probation, from the gate of responsible action, in every direction, clear back to the river of death that rolls at the extreme end, "light is sown."

II. The SOWERS, implied in the fact, "Light is sown."

First: God was the first being to scatter this precious seed. Dwelling in the midst of the unlocked granaries of "light" in regard to Himself, and the universe, and especially in regard to the great scheme of salvation, He soon commenced to scatter the seed, which was caught up and disseminated more widely by "holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It would seem that God could not scatter this seed into all the dark chilly corners of our moral nature without becoming identified with humanity and dwelling in mortal flesh, thus giving Him the unique advantage of both human and Divine hands in scattering the "light."

Secondly: "Light is sown by the righteous," (1) for his own good, (2) for the good of others.

Sometimes we have got to sow our own "light." Little irregularities, follies, or besetments may be persisted in till

we are made to see, by the light of experience, that they are deceptive and damaging.

Thirdly : Light is sown for the righteous by the wicked. (1) By wicked nations. French Revolution, the result of the infidelity and atheism of France. (2) By wicked men. The sensuality, want, destitution, misery of the multitude who forget God, is light revealing to the righteous the blessedness of his choice. That young man with chained limbs, and in the grip of the officer, who is taking him to the state prison, is sowing light on the slippery places and awful snares of sin.

III. The PERSONS for whom the sowing is done. "The righteous," not the half-hearted, worldly, or hypocritical professor, but the man whose purpose in the right is a whole purpose, and who stands before his own conscience and his God in the full honours of rectitude. Such a man, no matter where he may be, is surrounded with growing light. "His path is that of the just, shining more and more." He sees the foot-print of others who have gone before and gloriously triumphed over every foe. He sees that goodness, not greatness, is the condition of success in life. As he nears the Jordan of death he sees how others have triumphed over death. Thus "light is sown."

America.

T. KELLY.

SERMONIC NOTES ON THE VISIONS OF EZEKIEL.

No. XXI.

Subject: The Name of the City; God's Presence the full Blessedness of His People.

Chapter xlvii. 13-23; xlviii., chiefly verse 35.

HERE we have the acme of prophetic hope, just as in some visions of the earlier half of this book we had the lowest depths of prophetic terror and curse. For we have already noticed that this prophecy of Ezekiel, while it is "the last expiring cry of the Jewish monarchy," is, like the fabled cry of the dying swan, a noble song as well as a cry. From his captivity, and from the midst of visions of his country's

desolations that must have seemed to him as the very "suburbs of hell," it was given him to gaze upon, and to paint for his hearers, the glorious future that was hovering over the true Israel of God. That Israel is to be folded in safety by a True Shepherd ; is to be, spiritually as a man in robust and vigorous health, for "a new heart and a new spirit" shall be given ; is to be, in the completeness of its revival, "an exceeding great army," quickened to life by mystic breath "from the four winds," and is to go forth to conquer in a terrific struggle with the "Gog and Magog" of heathenism ; is to become a vast and perfect "Temple ;" is to be blessed and to bless others by a "river" of healing waters. But its highest glory is revealed in the last two words of the book, for it is to be as a country, the name of whose city is Jehovah Shammah, "the Lord is there." Whatever may be the necessary modification of the translation of this word, "Jehovah Shammah," which probably should be rendered "Jehovah thither," and means that, according to an old promise in Deuteronomy, God continually turns His eye and His heart to the city, the truth taught is easily understood from our English text. The Lord will surely Himself be where His heart and eye so continually are ; and the glory and blessedness of this city consist in the certainty of the Divine Presence. Its name, that which is its boast, that which marks it off from others, that which describes its life and circumstances, is "Jehovah Shammah."

Now, in the allotment of the land to the tribes, and the construction and naming of the city with which this closing vision is taken up, there may be several *local and temporary significations*. It may be that, as in some other of the visions, there is (a) first of all reference to the rapidly nearing national and religious *restoration of the Jews under the leadership of Zerubbabel, and Ezra and Nehemiah*. But the spirit-stirring events that are associated with the names of these patriot heroes, while they fulfil very much that Ezekiel foresaw, could not have exhausted the meaning of these predictions. For such a city was never built, the blessedness here

described was never perfectly enjoyed by the Jews at any time after their captivity. Moreover, if we take the literal boundary line of the country and previously of the temple given by the prophet, we are assured, by the measurement of Lightfoot, that the land is simply Canaan within Jordan, and "so we have a temple larger than all ancient Jerusalem, and his central portion for the city, prince, and priesthood larger than all the land of Canaan as described by himself." There may be a further literal fulfilment of the prophecy (β) *in the connection of the Incarnate Christ with Jerusalem*. When Simeon took the infant Jesus in his arms in the temple, when the Sacred Boy of twelve inquired in that temple, indeed in every incident of His life and death connected with Jerusalem, we have a revelation of what is meant by "Jehovah Shammah." But that was not perpetual. That city knew not the day of its visitation, and Jehovah Himself was as a wayfaring man and a stranger to it. The fig-tree of the Jewish people was torn up; the bird, refusing to be sheltered by the wings that often would have gathered and sheltered it, has wandered into the tangled wilderness and the black night. Others find further fulfilment of the prophecy in (γ) *some future restoration of Israel*. Without again noting the difficulties that seem to stand in the way of the literal interpretation of this as of the earlier visions, we simply and gladly insist that, if there be such national restoration, the glory and blessedness of the people of its city will be in a special manifestation and abiding consciousness of the presence of God.

Meanwhile, all who are true Israelites, who have the promised clean heart and new spirit, who have tasted of the water of life that is offered freely, who are saved by Israel's Messiah, and are the loyal subjects of David's Son and Lord, will find in their experience what is the *universal and lasting* teaching of this vision. They have their fullest blessedness only in whatever can be symbolized to them by a city whose name is "Jehovah Shammah."

I. CHRISTLY MEN HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE IN THE CHURCH. Israel is the Scriptural type of the Church. And we easily

recognise the relationship between the "city of the living God" of which the apostle speaks, and the new Jerusalem John saw, and this city of vision. For in its strong foundation on the Rock, in its vastness, in its beauty and safety as it lies foursquare, in its provision for all the Jewish tribes, and its welcome too to proselytes from the heathen by its gates that open from all sides, we have a material sketch of the spiritual Church of Christ. Any Church that may not truly be called by that name, "Jehovah Shammah," that has not in its worship, and its activities, its social fellowships and philanthropic labours, God's manifested presence, is no Church at all. An ecclesiastical society it may be, a kindly club, a political institution; but a Church it is not. To the Church belongs by special, inalienable right, this name, "Jehovah Shammah," for the Saviour has promised, "Lo, I am with you all days, even unto the end of the world." And He is so surely in the Church, that if the veil be taken off a man's heart, he sees Christ in the tears of the penitent, the gladness of the joyful, the pages of the Scriptures, the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper, and the water of baptism, the brotherhood of Christian people, and the conversion of sinners. And His chief joy is, not in the size, or splendour, or energetic life of the city,—the Church,—but in this, "The Lord is there."

II. CHRISTLY MEN HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE IN THE AGE. "Jehovah Shammah" is not the name of some fossil city, some old time that has no life in it, some centuries excavated by history, but long since motionless and still. No, it is the name of this century, the name of to-day. God is the God of the living. And to His faithful people the name of the age in which they live is, "the Lord is there." They see this name inscribed (*a*) *on human affairs generally*. In all the movements of the time towards liberty and light, in all that tends to lessen human woe and to increase human joy, in a word, in all that is true in art, science, exploration, civilization, as well as in what is termed religion, God is felt to be moving. God is heard to be speaking to the whole visional

city, to the part that, in distinction from the rest, is called "the profane place;" and this name belongs to the whole of human life, in its every land and class and age. There is to the Christly man a keen interest and deep sacredness, for "the Lord is there," (3) *in all that concerns individual life*. "All things work together for good." Fear not, I am with thee.

III. CHRISTLY MEN HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE IN NATURE. The opening sentences of Scripture have no meaning more easily understood than this, that God's eye and heart were on creation from the very beginning. When we read, God "saw that it was good," and again, "He saw that it was very good," we learn how certain it is that God cared for what He had made, and how assuredly we may read in the light, and on the waters, and land, and herb, and cattle, and man, at least the inscription, "Jehovah *thither*." But when all Old Testament Scripture implied Jesus Christ by His miracles in the realm of nature and His Lordship over her has illustrated to the Christian eye that the true inscription may well be, not "Jehovah *thither*," but "the Lord is there." Every reader of the prophets and of the Psalms has often felt that to the ear of Hebrew piety, nature was eloquent with the voice of God. Even Greek thought, as it peopled the groves and streams and mountains with divinities, was evidently groping after "the unknown God," whose power upholds all, whose character is revealed in all, whose presence fills all, for "in Him we live and move and have our being." To the Christly man, who dwells much and earnestly on Christ's teaching, who inbreathes Christ's spirit, who imitates, however humbly, Christ's life, the world, not only in its stars, in the skies that span it, or in its seas that roll around it, but in its sparrows and its lilies and its common grass, tells of God. To such a man "every common bush is on fire with God." He feels not only about scenes of lavish luxuriance and places that teem with richest forms of varied loveliness, but about spots the most desolate, with only some grey stone to tell of the unfathomed past, and a sky above to tell of the awful eternities, "Surely God is in this place." To whom is our earth

most beautiful ? I think, not to the agriculturist, who, measuring its acreage and calculating its produce, sees written, "Wealth is there ;" nor yet to the mere explorer, botanist, geologist, who simply sees this or that or the other organism there ; but to the Christian, who, through all, and above all else, sees, "The Lord is there."

IV. CHRISTLY MEN WILL HAVE THIS EXPERIENCE PERFECTLY IN HEAVEN. Whether designedly or not, John's vision of heaven is inextricably blended with the vision of Ezekiel in the minds of Christian thinkers. There is much that belongs to both in structure and in provision. There are several points of contrast. In Ezekiel's vision the city has a temple ; in heaven there is none, for all is temple. In Ezekiel's vision the city is far smaller and less lustrous and of inferior material to that which John saw in the Apocalypse. But there is this in common :—consciousness of God is the great blessedness of both. In heaven, consciousness of the devil will be known no more ; the consciousness of others, that through their sin and sorrow and our weakness is often overpoweringly oppressive, will have given way to a happy and strong brotherhood ; and consciousness of self, which is born of sin, and is the darkest and most inseparable shadow of our selfishness, will be known no more. God dwells there in an effulgence of love from which none shrink. Christ is the centre of the city, and is so seen that in seeing Him all become like Him. The heavenliness of heaven is not chiefly that beauty is there, or rest, or friends, or glory ; but that Christ is there. "He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Let us rejoice for those who have gone to heaven, because "the Lord is there."

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject : THE HIGHEST HUMAN BENEDICTION ON THE HIGHEST CLASS OF MEN.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."--EPH. vi. 24.

Elsewhere we have furnished a homiletical exposition of the whole of this epistle.* We take this verse now simply because it brings under our notice the highest moral class found in society, and the highest benediction that man can pronounce on man.

I. THE HIGHEST MORAL CLASS FOUND IN SOCIETY. Who are they? Those "that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Dr. Davidson in his translation substitutes the word incorruption for "sincerity,"—a term more comprehensive. The idea is that of a true or right love. What is it to love Christ rightly?

First: It is to love Him with the most *comprehensive* love. Love Him with the love of *gratitude*, because He is the kindest of beings; with the love of *esteem*, because He is the holiest of beings; with the love of *reverence*, because He is the greatest of beings; with the love of *adoration*, because He is the best of beings; with the love of *benevolence*, because He works for the good of the universe.

Secondly: It is to love Him with the most *supreme* love. Love for Him should be above all other loves, it should be the imperial passion, bringing into captivity every faculty and feeling. His name should be held above every name in the soul.

Thirdly: It is to love Him with the most *abiding* love. It should not be a passing emotion, however strong, but a permanent ever-abiding force. To love Christ thus is to love Him with "sincerity," or with incorruption.

Now the men who thus love Christ are the highest class in society; wherever found, or in whatever secular circumstances they are found, they are the true aristocracy, the *moral nobility*. All other nobilities are, as compared with them, charlatanic and contemptible. They are on earth the *representatives*, the *disciples*, and the *ministers* of Him who is "exalted above all heavens."

II. THE HIGHEST BENEDICTION PRONOUNCED BY SOCIETY. What is that? "Grace be with all." Regard Paul here as the mouthpiece of the most enlightened and generous social "good-will." Man can wish for his fellow-creature nothing higher than "grace,"

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ii,

that is Divine love, Divine favour. Men are constantly pouring benedictions on their fellows, and that for different reasons. They have a blessing for warriors, for statesmen, for rulers, for money-makers, for authors, for inventors, etc. But there is no class of men on whom they can pronounce blessings with greater honour to themselves than on those "who love our Lord Jesus Christ."

First : It is the most *justly deserved*. All that love the Lord Jesus Christ deserve this benediction. "All," whatever their social grade, rich or poor, high or low ; all, whatever their theological creed, Calvinian or Arminian ; all, whatever their ecclesiastical sect, Catholic or Protestant, Conformists or Nonconformists. There are those of "all creeds and Churches who love the Lord Jesus Christ ;" and this love is the virtuous, valuable, morally imperial thing. Blessings on all who have it !

Secondly : It is the most *universally demanded*. All people should pronounce this benediction on this class. *Philosophers* should do it, because no class contributes more to the love of inquiry and research. *Politicians* should do it, because no class are such efficient promoters of civil order, freedom, and good government. *Philanthropists* should do it, because no class are such ardent, indefatigable,

unremitting, and efficient labourers in the cause of humanity.

Subject : THE GLORY OF A TRULY GOOD MAN.

"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world."—1 JOHN v. 4.

This short utterance leads us to consider the distinguishing glory of a really true man.

I. He HAS THE HIGHEST MORAL PEDIGREE. In conventional society there are fools who pride themselves in their ancestry, although their ancestry, in a moral sense, were notoriously ignorant, inhuman, and despicable. The Cæsars were villains, and yet the men who here in England can prove that they came down from their loins, move as if they were gods on the earth. The good man, however, has the strongest reason for exultation in considering his ancestry. He is "born of God." Born, of course, in a *moral* sense. He has been regenerated, made a new creature in Christ Jesus.

First : *In him there is a moral resemblance to the Greatest Being*. As the human offspring partakes of the nature of his parent, so the good man partakes of the moral character of God, a character loving, pure, just. He is "changed into the same image."

Secondly : *Over him there*

is the tenderest care of the Greatest Being. "As a father pitieth his children," etc.

Thirdly: *In him there is the most loyal devotion to the Greatest Being.* He loves the "Most High" supremely, constantly, practically. What are the most illustrious princes of the earth in pedigree, compared to that of a truly good man, however indigent in secular circumstances, obscure in social life?

II. HE ACHIEVES THE HIGHEST MORAL CONQUEST. He overcomes the world. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." What is meant by the world here? Not the physical world, not the scientific world, not the commercial world, nor the artistic world. The world here is used to designate the mighty aggregate of moral evil that is found on this earth. It means, in one word, sin in every form. Now, a good man overcomes this. He conquers errors, lusts; he overcomes bad habits and reforms corrupt institutions. He overcomes the world. Who is the greatest conqueror? Not the man who lays the greatest number of human beings dead upon the battle field, but the man who crushes the largest amount of moral evil.*

* Remarks on latter clause of the verse will be found in *Homilist*, Series III., vol. ix., page 42.

Subject: CHRISTIANITY A TRANSCENDENTAL SYSTEM.

"And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. — REV. xxii. 1.

Philosophers have their transcendental theories, but Christianity transcends their highest speculations. Taking the text as a symbolic representation of it—which we are justified in doing, we make two remarks.

I. It is transcendental in its VALUE. It is "water." What on earth, what throughout the whole material universe, so far as we know, is of such worth as water! So impressed were some of the greatest sages of antiquity with its value that they regarded it as the first principle, the fountal source of all things. But what is the character of this water?

First: It is a "*river*." It is not a stagnant pool, a sleeping lake, or a purling brook; but a river, profound in depth, majestic in volume, resistless in movement.

Secondly: It is a "*pure*" river. No impurities have been drained into it. Its channels are clean. It is fresh and pure from the holy heavens. How pure is Christianity! How holy its morals, how morally perfect its leading character—Christ!

Thirdly: It is a pure river of life. It not only diffuses

life through all the regions through which it rolls its waters, but goes up into the air, forms clouds, sails through the heavens, and discharges itself upon the barren hills, thus giving life to the world. Christianity is a quickening system, it quickens intellect, conscience, heart.

Fourthly: It is a pure river of life *that is transparent*. "Clear as crystal." This river, like a perfect looking-glass, mirrors the bright heavens above, and all the objects around it. How transparent is Christianity! It can be seen through and through. What character was ever so transparent as the character of Christ. You see with a glance the one ruling principle that worked all His faculties and explained His life—*love*. Here then is a transcendental system that rolls in the moral domain of earth like some mighty Amazon in the material. What would man's moral world be without it? Ah! what?

II. It is transcendental in its *ORIGIN*. Whence does this river take its rise? Where is the fountain head? Not on earth, not from any particular province of the universe, but from "the throne of God and of the Lamb."

First: It proceeds from "the *throne*." It comes from the centre of universal authority. Christianity is a system of authority. It is a code rather than a creed, it is more regulative than speculative.

Secondly: It proceeds from the "throne of *God*." There are many thrones. We read of thrones and principalities, etc. But this is the throne from which all other thrones derive their authority, to which all are amenable, the throne of God. Christianity is a Divine system; its congruity with all collateral history, with our moral intuitions, with all our *à priori* notions of a God, proves its divinity.

Thirdly: It proceeds from the "throne of God *and of the Lamb*." Christ has to do with it. It contains His life, it mirrors his character, it bears on its majestic bosom His redemptive provision for a fallen world.

CONCLUSION:—Such is the Gospel. Value this river. What are other books to the Bible? Mere puddled pools to the Mississippi. Kind Heaven, speed the course of this river! May it penetrate every region of the world, and roll its waves of life through every heart!

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its Divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSEA, JOEL and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exaltation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem, we may with some confidence infer that he flourished after the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year B. C. 558, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible; one chapter comprehends all. Its *subject* is the destruction of Edom, on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its *style* is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

No. CIX.

. Subject: PRIDE

"Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised. The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high: that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground? Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord. If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?"—OBAD. i. 2-5.

These words may be taken as suggesting and illustrating one of the chief sins of all sinners, viz., *pride*, that which poets

tell us "peoples hell and holds its prisoners there." The words suggest three facts in relation to pride.

I. That THE MOST DESPICABLE PEOPLE ARE OFTEN THE MOST DISPOSED TO PRIDE. Edom, which is charged with the sin of pride, is here described as "small among the heathen" and "greatly despised." Not only were they a small people, small comparatively in numbers, wealth, and influence, but despised. They became contemptible in the estimation of their contemporaries. Small things and small men are not always despicable, for God made the small as well as the great. It is the moral character that creates and deserves contempt.

Now, small and disdainable as were these Edomites, they were nevertheless *proud*. It

is often if not ever so. The smaller the men the more disposed to pride. The man small in *body* is often swollen out with ideas of the comeliness of his corporeity; the man small in *intellect* is the same. The men who rate themselves as great thinkers, scholars, authors, preachers, are invariably small-brained men. Men of great intellect and lofty genius are characteristically humble. An old writer has observed that "where the river is the deepest the water glides the smoothest. Empty casks sound most; whereas the well-fraught vessel silences its own sound. As the shadow of the sun is largest when his beams are lowest: so we are always least when we make ourselves the greatest."

Another thought suggested is,—

II. THAT PRIDE EVERMORE DISPOSES TO SELF-DECEPTION AND PRESUMPTION. (1) To *self-deception*. "The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee." Pride is a wonderful artist, it magnifies the small, it beautifies the ugly, it honours the ignoble, it makes the truly little, ugly, contemptible man appear large, handsome, dignified in his own eyes. It is said that Accius, the poet, who was a dwarf, would have himself painted as tall and commanding in stature. In truth, it makes the man who is a devil at heart appear to himself a saint. Witness the Pharisee in the Temple. Such is the law of pride. (2) To *presumption*. "Thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" The Edomites are here taunted with

the confidence that they placed in their lofty and precipitous mountain, and the insolence with which they scouted any attempt to subdue them. A proud man always presumes on strength, reputation, and resources which he has not. Whilst he stands on quicksand he fancies himself on a rock. "Thou sayest thou art rich and increased in goods, and hast need of nothing, whereas," etc. Ah! self-deception and presumption are the twin offspring of pride.

III. THAT THE MOST STRENUOUS EFFORTS TO AVOID PUNISHMENT DUE TO PRIDE WILL PROVE FUTILE. Two things are taught here concerning its punishment,—(1) Its *certainty*. "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord." Here these sinners are assured by a bold hyperbole, that whatever attempts they made to avoid retribution, they would fail. If, like the eagle, they towered high up into the air, far up among the clouds, nestled among the stars, and made the clouds their footstool, the fowler of retribution would bring them down. All attempts on behalf of the impenitent sinner to avoid punishment must fail when the day for justice to do its work has come. (2) Its *completeness*. "If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night, (how art thou cut off!) would they not have stolen till they had enough? if the grape-gatherers came to thee, would they not leave some grapes?" The spoliation which thou shalt suffer shall not be such as that which thieves cause, bad as that

is; for these, when they have seized enough, or all they can get in a hurry, leave the rest—nor such as grape-gatherers cause in a vineyard, for they, when they have gathered most of the grapes, leave gleanings behind—but it shall be utter, so as to leave thee nothing. The exclamation “how art thou cut off!” bursting in amidst the words of the image, marks strongly excited feeling. The contrast between Edom, where no gleanings shall be left, and Israel, where at the worst a gleanings is left, is striking, (Isa. xvii. 6; xxiv. 13.) Retribution strips the sinner of everything, nothing is left but sheer existence, and that existence intolerable.

CONCLUSION.—Beware of pride then. The primal cause of all sin, all pain, and all woe to come, the great fountain-head of evil, is pride. It must lead to ruin. “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

“He that is proud eats up himself,
Pride is
His own glass, his own trumpet,
his own chronicle,
And whatever praises itself but in
The deed, devours the deed in the
praise.” *Shakspeare.*

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No. CX.

Subject: GOD IN RETRIBUTION.

“How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up! All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, and prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is

none understanding in him. Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter.”—OBAD. i. 6-9.

Man is essentially a dependent being. The ineradicable and ever-operative sense of his dependence urges him to lean his being on some object for rest and safety. His sin is, that he puts his confidence on objects unworthy and unsafe. “Some trust in chariots, some in horses,” etc. The Edomites, it is suggested here, trusted to the insecure. Here we have God *in retribution, destroying the grounds of the sinner’s confidence.*

I. Did they trust to their MATERIAL DEFENCES: these were worthless. “How are the things of Esau searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!” The reference is to the hiding-places to which they resorted in cases of danger. The country of the Edomites was pre-eminently favourable for such concealment and shelter. The cities of Edom consisted of houses mostly cut in the rocks. “The great feature of the mountains of Edom is the mass of red bald-headed sandstone rocks, intersected, not by valleys, but by deep seams. In the heart of these rocks, itself invisible, lies Petra.”—*Stanley.* “Petra is unique. The whole Edomite country from Eleutheropolis to Petra and Selah hath small habitation (*habitationuncules*) in caves. And on account of the oppressive heat of the sun, as

being a southern province, hath underground cottages. Hence the aborigines whom Edom expelled were called Horites—*i. e.*, dwellers in caves." Nations may trust to their material defences, their armies, navies, fortifications; but they are as stubble to the raging fire when justice begins its work. Individuals may trust to their wealth, to material science and medical skill, to preserve their bodily lives; but when justice sends forth its emissary—death—what are these defences? Nothing, less than nothing, vanity.

II. Did they trust to their PLEDGED CONFEDERATES: these were worthless. "All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee even to the border: the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee; they prevailed against thee; they that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee: there is none understanding in him." Those confederates were probably Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, with whom the Edomites joined in resisting Nebuchadnezzar; but these failed them, probably turned against them; and even their friends who were at peace with them and ate their bread deceived them in their hour of trial. "To no quarter could the Idumeans look for aid. Their allies, their neighbours, their very dependants, so far from assisting them, would act treacherously towards them, and employ every means, both of an open and covert nature, to effect their ruin." How often it happens, that when men get into adverse circumstances, their old allies, professed friends, those

who have often partaken of their hospitality, not only fail them but turn against them. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." He that trusteth even on his firmest friends leaneth on a broken reed.

III. Did they trust to the WISDOM OF THEIR GREAT MEN; this was worthless. "Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau?" "The Idumeans confided not only in the natural strength of their country, but in the superiority of their intellectual talent. That they excelled in the arts and sciences is abundantly proved by the numerous traces of them in the Book of Job, which was undoubtedly written in their country. They were indeed proverbial for their philosophy, for the cultivation of which their intercourse with Babylon and Egypt was exceedingly favourable, as were likewise their means of acquiring information from the numerous caravans whose route lay through their country, thus forming a chain of communication between Europe and India."—*Henderson*. Yet what is the wisdom of man to trust in? "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." The wisdom of the wise is but foolishness; it is a miserable thing to trust in. Trust not in human wisdom: not in the wisdom of statesmen, scientists, ecclesiastics, theologians.

IV. Did they trust to the POWER OF THEIR MIGHTY MEN; this was worthless. "And thy mighty men, O Teman, shall be dismayed, to the end that every

one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter." Delitzsch renders this, "And thy heroes despair, O Teman." Teman was the proper name of the southern portion of Idumea, called so after Tema, a grandson of Esau. Men trust in their heroes. At the banquets of public societies, companies, corporations, how does this confidence come out in the inflated cant of the speakers on the occasion, in relation to the army or the navy. A false confidence this also! God, by a breath of pestilence, can wither

all the armies of Europe in an instant.

CONCLUSION: There is nothing in which the sinner trusts, nothing in matter or mind, in force or skill, that can stand for one instant before the retributive stroke of justice. Though some trust in chariots and some in horses, let us trust in the name of the Lord. Men who trust in anything short of God, are like the man who in a thunderstorm takes shelter under a tree, whose tall branches attract the lightning which scorches him to ashes.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Daniel's Dream of the Four Beasts.

(Continued from Page 51.)

THE *Second Beast* (ver 5). יָאֵרֵךְ signifies that this beast came first into sight after the lion, which also the predicates prove. אַחֲרֵי expresses the difference from the first beast, תְּבִינָה the order in which it appears. The beast was like a bear. Next to the lion, it is the strongest among animals; and on account of its voracity it was called by Aristotle ζῷον πανφάγον. The words לְשֵׁטֶרֶד חֲקִימָה present some difficulty. They have been differently explained. The explanation of Rabbi Nathan, "and it established a dominion," with which Kranichfeld also agrees, is not only in opposition to the חֲדָה, but is also irreconcilable with the line of thought. חֲדָה is not the indefinite article, but the numeral; and the thought that the beast established *one* dominion, or a united dominion, is in the highest degree strange, for the character of a united or compact dominion belongs to the second world-kingdom, in no case in a

greater degree than to the Babylonian kingdom, and in general the establishing of a dominion cannot properly be predicted of a beast=a kingdom. The old translators (LXX., Theod., Peshito, Saad.) and the rabbis have interpreted the word עָרָד in the sense of *side*, a meaning which is supported by the Targ. עַרְדָּא, and is greatly strengthened by the Arabic *s'thar*, without our needing to adopt the reading עָרָד found in several codd. The object to the verb הֶקְרַעַת is easily supplied by the context, *it raised up*, i. e., *its body on one side*. This means neither that it leaned on one side (Ebrard), nor that it stood on its fore-feet (Hävernick), for the sides of a bear are not its fore and hinder part; but we are to conceive that the beast, resting on its feet, raised up the feet of the one side for the purpose of going forward, and so raised the shoulder or the whole body on that side. But with such a motion of the beast the geographical situation of the kingdom (Geier, Mich. Ros.) cannot naturally be represented, much less can the near approach of the destruction of the kingdom (Hitzig) be signified. Hofmann, Delitzsch, and Kliefoth have found the right interpretation by a reference to chap. ii. and viii. As in chap. ii., the arms on each side of the beast signify that the second kingdom will consist of two parts; and this is more distinctly indicated in chap. viii. by the two horns, one of which rose up after the other, and higher; so also in this verse the double-sidedness of this world-kingdom is represented by the bear lifting itself up on the one side. The Medo-Persian bear, as such, has, as Kliefoth well remarks, two sides: the one, the Median side, is at rest after the efforts made for the erection of the world-kingdom; but the other, the Persian side, raises itself up, and then becomes not only higher than the first, but also is prepared for new rapine.

The further expression, *it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth*, has also been variously interpreted. That עֲצָמֹת means *ribs*, not *sides*, is as certain as that the ribs in the mouth between the teeth do not denote side-teeth, tusks, or fangs (Saad., Häv.). The עֲצָמֹת in the mouth between the teeth, are the booty which the bear has seized, according to

the undoubted use of the word ; cf. Amos iii. 12 ; Ps. cxxiv. 6 ; Job xxix. 17 ; Jer. li. 44. Accordingly, by the ribs we cannot understand either the Persians, Medians, or Babylonians as the nations that constituted the strength of the kingdom (Ephr. Syr., Hieron., Ros.), or the three Median kings (Ewald), because neither the Medes nor the three Median kings can be regarded as a prey of the Median or Medo-Persian world. The "ribs" which the beast is grinding between its teeth cannot be the peoples who constitute the kingdom, or the kings ruling over it ; but only peoples or countries which it has conquered and annexed to itself. The determining of these peoples and countries depends on which kingdom is represented by the bear. Of the interpreters who understand by the bear the Median kingdom, Maurer and Delitzsch refer to the three chief satrapies (chap. vi. 3-22). Not these, however, but only the lands divided between them, could be regarded as the prey between the teeth of the beast, and then Media also must be excluded ; so that the reference of the words to the three satrapies is altogether inadmissible. Hitzig thinks that the reference is to those towns that were destroyed by the Medians, viz., Nineveh, Larissa, and a third which he cannot specify ; V. Leng regards the number three as a round number, by which the voracity of the beast is shown ; Kranichfeld understands by the three ribs constituent parts of a whole of an older national confederation already dissolved and broken asunder, of which, however he has no proof. We see, then, that if the bear is taken as representing the Median kingdom, the three ribs in its mouth cannot be explained. If, on the other hand, the Medo-Persian world-kingdom is intended by the bear, then the three ribs in its mouth are the three kingdoms of Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt, which were conquered by the Medo-Persians. This is the view of Hofner, Ebr., Zünd, and Klief. The latter, however, thinks that the number "three" ought not to be regarded as symbolical, but as forming only the contrast to the number four in ver. 6, and intimating that the second beast will not devour in all the regions of the world,

but only on three sides, and will make a threefold and not a fourfold plunder, and therefore will not reach absolute universality. But since the symbolical value of each number is formed from its arithmetical signification, there is no reason here, any more than there is in the analogous passages (chap. viii. 4, 22), to depart wholly from the exact signification.

The last expression of the verse, "*Arise, devour much flesh,*" most interpreters regard as a summons to go forth conquering. But this exposition is neither necessary, nor does it correspond to the relative position of the words. The eating much flesh does not form such a contrast to the three ribs in the mouth between the teeth, that it must be interpreted of other flesh than that already held by the teeth with the ribs. It may be very well understood, with Ebrard and Kleifoth, of the consuming of the flesh of the ribs; so that the command to eat much flesh is only an explication of the figure of the ribs held between the teeth, and contains only the thought that the beast must wholly consume the plunder it has seized with its teeth. The plural וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ (*they spoke*) is impersonal, and therefore not to be attributed to the angel as speaking.

Ver. 6. *The Third Beast*, which Daniel saw after the second, was like a panther (leopard), which is neither so kingly as the lion nor so strong as the bear; but is like to both in rapacity, and superior to them in the springing agility with which it catches its prey; so that one may say, with Kleifoth, that in the subordination of the panther to the lion and the bear, the same gradation is repeated as that which is found (of the third kingdom) in chap. ii., of the copper (brass). Of the panther it is said, that *it had four wings of a fowl and four heads*. The representation of the beast with four wings increases the agility of its movements to the speed of the flight of a bird, and expresses the thought that the kingdom represented by that beast would extend itself in flight over the earth; not so royally as Nebuchadnezzar,—for the panther has not eagle's wings, but only the wings of a fowl,—but extending to all the regions of the earth, for it has four wings. At the same time the beast has four heads, not two only, as

one might have expected with four wings. The number four thus shows that the heads have an independent signification, and do not stand in relation to the four wings symbolizing the spreading out of the kingdom into the four quarters of the heavens (Bertholdt, Häv., Kran.). As little do the four wings correspond with the four heads in such a way that by both there is represented only the dividing of the kingdom into four other kingdoms (Häv. *Comment.*, Auberl.). Wings are everywhere an emblem of rapid motion. Heads, on the contrary, where the beast signifies a kingdom, are the heads of the kingdom, *i.e.*, the kings or rulers; hence it follows that the four heads of the panther are the four successive Persian kings, whom alone Daniel knows (chap. xi. 2). Without regard to the false interpretations of chap. xi. 2 on which this opinion rests, it is to be noticed that the four heads do not rise up one after another; but that they all exist contemporaneously on the body of the beast, and therefore can only represent four contemporary kings, or signify that the kingdom is divided into four kingdoms. That the four wings are mentioned before the four heads, signifies that the kingdom spreads itself over the earth with the speed of a bird's flight, and then becomes a fourfold kingdom, or divides itself into four kingdoms, as is distinctly shown in chap. viii. 5, ff.

The last statement, "*and dominion was given to it,*" corresponds with that in chap. ii. 39, "*it shall bear rule over all the earth,*" *i.e.*, shall found an actual and strong world-empire.

Ver. 7 and 8. *The Fourth Beast.* Introduced by a more detailed description, the fourth beast is presented more distinctly before our notice than those which preceded it. Its terribleness and its strength, breaking in pieces and destroying all things, and the fact that no beast is named to which it can be likened, represent it as different from all the beasts that went before. This description corresponds with that of the fourth kingdom, denoted by the legs and the feet of the metallic image of the monarchies (chap. ii.). The iron breaking in pieces all things (chap. ii. 40), is here represented by the great iron teeth with which this monster devoured and

brake in pieces. In addition to that, there are also feet, or, as ver. 19 by way of supplement adds, "claws of brass," with which in the mere fury of its rage it destroyed all that remained, *i.e.*, all that it did not devour and devour with its teeth. ^{הָיָא מְשִׁנִּיה רַבָּר} (*it was made different*) denotes not complete diversity of being, from which Hitz. and Del. conclude that the expression suits only the Macedonian world-kingdom, which, as occidental, was different in its nature from the three preceding monarchies, which shared among themselves an oriental home, and a different form of civilization and despotic government. For although ^{מְשִׁנִּיה} expresses more than ^{אַחֲדָה} (ver. 5), yet the ^{שִׁנִּיךָ הָא מן הָא} (diverse one from another) spoken (ver. 3) of all the beasts, shows that ^{מְשִׁנִּיה} cannot be regarded as expressing perfect diversity of being, but only diversity in appearance. The beast was of such terrible strength and destructive rage, that the whole animal world could furnish no representative by whose name it might be characterised. It had ten horns, by which its terrible strength is denoted, because a horn is in Scripture always the universal symbol of armed strength. With this the interpretation (ver. 24) that these horns are so many kings or kingdoms, fully corresponds. In the ten horns the ten toes of the image (chap. ii.) are again repeated. The number ten comes into consideration only according to its symbolical meaning of comprehensive and definite totality. That the horns are on the head of the one beast, signifies that the unfolding of its power in the ten kingdoms is not a weakening of its power, but only its full display.

Ver. 8. Here a new event is brought under our notice. While continuing to contemplate the horns (the idea of continuance lies in the particip. with the *verb. fin.*), Daniel sees another little horn rise up among them, which uproots, *i.e.*, destroys, three of the other horns that were already there. He observes that this horn had the eyes of a man, and a mouth which spake great things. The eye and the mouth suggest a human being as represented by the horn. Eyes, and seeing with eyes, are the symbols of insight, circumspec-

tion, prudence. This king will thus excel the others in point of wisdom and circumspection. But why the eyes of a *man*? Certainly this is not merely to indicate to the reader that the horn signified a man. This is already distinctly enough shown by the fact that eyes, a mouth, and speech were attributed to it. The eyes of a man were not attributed to it in opposition to a beast, but in opposition to a higher celestial being; for whom the ruler, denoted by the horn, might be mistaken, on account of the terribleness of his rule and government. "*Ne eum putemus juxta quorundam opinionem vel diabolum esse vel dæmonem, sed unum de hominibus in quo totus Satanas habiturus sit corporaliter,*" as Jerome well remarks; cf. Hofmann and Kliefoth. A mouth which speaketh great things, is a vain-glorious mouth. דָּבָרִים רַבִּים are *presumptuous things*, not directly blasphemies (Häv.). In the Apocalypse xiii. 5, *μεγάλα* and *βλασφημίαι* are distinguished.

C. F. KIEL, D.D.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CLXXXVI.

Subject: DIVINE MERCY IN HUMAN AFFLICTION.

"For the Lord will not cast off for ever: But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."—LAMENTATIONS iii. 31, 32.

This is the testimony of the experience of a man in great affliction. Jérusalem was now overthrown, the Temple burnt, the throne of David now in the dust, the yoke of oppression on the necks of the Jewish people, and the seal of Heaven on their calamities. Albeit the prophet says, "He doth not afflict willingly." Thus, like Milton in his blindness, he asserts Divine Providence, and justifies the ways of God to man. The subject is Divine mercy in human affliction. This is seen (I.) In the RELUCTANCE WITH WHICH THE AFFLICTION PROCEEDS FROM GOD. All afflic-

tions may be said to come from Him, inasmuch as they are the penalties of His laws and take effect by His permission. He foresees all human suffering, and could prevent it. Hence, though He does not directly inflict suffering, suffering in this sense may be traced to Him. He causeth grief; He afflicts; but this suffering is not according to His will, "He doth not afflict willingly." Suffering is repugnant to His benevolent nature, why then does He allow it to come? First: Because it is according to the benevolent laws of the universe. Love has linked indissolubly suffering and sin together. The greatest calamity that could happen to the universe would be a dissolution of this connection. Secondly: Because sufferings have a disciplinary influence. They tend to quicken spiritual thought, loosen interest in the material, and throw the soul back upon itself, the spiritual and the everlasting. True, it does not always discipline, but it always should and always does in those who are the children of God. "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," etc. This is seen (II.) in THE LOVING-KINDNESS WITH WHICH AFFLICTIONS ARE EVER ATTENDED. "Yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies." Divine mercy is always seen in sufferings. It is seen, First: In the slightrness of the suffering compared both with the deserts and the enjoyments. How much misery does the sinner deserve? Let his own conscience answer. How little are his sufferings, compared with this! How much happiness does he enjoy every day! What are his pains, compared with the bulk of his enjoyments? It is seen, Secondly: In the alleviations and sustaining ministries afforded under suffering. How much to alleviate suffering has the greatest sufferer, how many relieving ministries at hand—loving friends, medical science, etc., etc.

No. CLXXXVII.

Subject: A GUILTY CONSCIENCE.

"The yoke of my transgressions is bound by His hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck."—LAMENTATIONS i. 14.

Take these words to illustrate a guilty conscience, or a conscience under a profound sense of its guilt. I. Its sense of OPPRESSION. It feels itself under a "yoke." It is a heavy iron, a crushing "yoke" is sin. It is on the neck, there is no breaking

away from it. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" II. Its sense of DEGRADATION. It feels itself held in a miserable vassalage, carnally sold under sin. What a degradation is sin! A quickened conscience alone can realize it. III. Its sense of RETRIBUTION. It feels that the heavy, degrading yoke is bound by "His hand," the hand of justice: that his transgression is like a chain wreathed by retributive law upon the neck. The guilty conscience awakened feels that God is in all its sufferings, that there is justice in all.

No. CLXXXVIII.

Subject: REDEMPTIVE TRUTHS—"THINGS."

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."—HEB. ii. 1.

Gospel truths are here called "things." They are not mere words, sounds, dreams, but entities, stupendous realities. They involve, amongst other things, God's love for sinners and Christ's mediatorial agencies. I. They are things COMMUNICATED. "We have heard." They do not come to us either by intuition or investigation, they are brought to us, they are revelations that God at first made to some men that they might reveal them to other men, and thus on for ever. "We have heard" them from parents, teachers, ministers. II. They are things to be RETAINED. We are exhorted to give "earnest heed" to them, "lest at any time we should let them slip." They should be held, not merely in memory, as facts, but in the heart, as forces. They should be held lovingly, supremely, unremittingly; they are our life. III. They are "things" the retainment of which REQUIRES MOST DETERMINED EFFORT. "We ought to give the more earnest heed." Why this earnest effort? (1) Because the loss of them would be the *greatest* calamity. To have had them and to have lost them, puts us in an infinitely worse condition than if we had never had them at all. "It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah," etc. (2) Because the loss of them is a *possible* calamity. Men have had them and lost them. There are many things in society that tend to relax the soul's hold upon them—remaining depravity within, seductive influences without.

No. CLXXXIX.

Subject: CHARACTER.

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe.”—JOEL iii. 13.

These words suggest three remarks concerning man's moral character. I. It is a GROWTH. The harvest begins with the germinating seed. Moral character, both good and bad, is a growing thing; thoughts grow, affections grow, principles grow, habits grow. Character is not like a rock, which remains the same from year to year; but rather like the tree, ever growing. Men get worse or better every day. II. It has a MATURITY. Every character ripens, reaches its harvest. Hemlock as well as wheat ripens; character, both evil and good, comes to maturation. III. It has RETRIBUTION. “Put ye in the sickle,” “Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.” “He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, he that soweth to the spirit shall reap everlasting life.” The time for the sickle hastens to all.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

“Books of Illustration” designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

**Subject: Nature's Method of answering Man's Questions,
The Chemical Experiment.**

A FORCE cannot be seen or grasped; we notice it only in the effects which it produces. If we would know whether a piece of steel possesses magnetic power, we apply a needle, and try whether this is attracted by it or not; we then conclude from its behaviour as to the absence or presence of magnetism. Precisely the same course, that of *experiment*,

must be taken in order to become acquainted with the chemical forces, the affinities of bodies for each other. Every experiment is a question put to a body, the answer to which we receive through a phenomenon, that is, through a change which we observe, sometimes by the sight or the smell, sometimes by the other senses.

Subject: The Transient,—The Ephemera.

WHAT an emblem of all transient things is the beautiful Ephemera! To acquire its lovely form, that lovely winged insect has been obliged to undergo several wonderful transmutations; but its glory, like man's pomp, is very short-lived, for the very hour of its perfection is the hour of its death, and it seems scarcely introduced to pleasure when it is obliged to part with life.

Subject: Total External Change does not necessarily imply Total Alteration,—The Snake and its Skin.

IT is of paramount importance,—in these days more than ever,—to discriminate between a mere change in the form of a thing and a radical alteration in its nature. Here is the test question for solution:—Is the change in question merely an external one, or is it a change in essence? Be not deceived, you may have a total change in the outside which leaves the subject of it still the same. Look among the bushes there, and you behold clearly enough the skin of a snake. He has certainly changed. Yes; but only in his skin. The snake is still alive, and as much a snake as ever. Even this modification of his external appearance, too, was (as it often is with other existences besides the snake) a mere matter of convenience. The external covering just thrown off was not so good as the one which was to supersede it, and which has been in preparation some time. So, as soon as the new skin was quite ready, the snake wriggled to the bushes most expedient for his purpose, and by their help literally crawled out of his old skin, and left it there on the bush. A wonderful

change, no doubt, in one sense, and yet it is one which is unattended by any alteration in the nature of the snake. We often observe in the operations of nature and in the tricks of politics changes which are not at all important, and superficial alterations which have no radical significance whatever. When the acorn develops into the oak, the transformation is wonderful. But when the snake sheds its skin, it is still a snake. The proceeding is just one of those many surface changes which the world sees, and whereof nothing important issues.

Subject: Great Power in Little Workers,—Invertebrate Animals.

THE strength of invertebrate animals is relatively speaking immense. Many persons have observed how out of proportion the jump of a flea is to its size. A flea is not more than an eighth of an inch, and it jumps a yard ; in proportion, a lion ought to jump two-thirds of a mile. Pliny shows in his Natural History, that the weights carried by ants appear exceedingly great when they are compared with the size of the indefatigable labourers. The strength of these insects is still more striking when one considers the edifices they are able to construct. Man is proud of his works ; but what are they after all in comparison with those of the ant, taking the relative heights into consideration ? The termes, or white ant, constructs habitations many yards in height, which are so firmly and solidly built that the buffaloes are able to mount them, and use them as observatories. They are made of particles of wood joined together by a gummy substance, and are able to resist even the force of a hurricane. The largest pyramid in Egypt is only 146 yards high, that is, about ninety times the average height of man ; whereas the nests of the termites are a thousand times the height of the insect which constructs them. Their habitations are thus twelve times higher than the largest specimens of architecture raised by human hands. We men are obviously much beneath these little insects, so far as strength and the spirit of working go. Let us contemplate their work and renew our labours.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

ORIGINAL SIMILITUDES.

LOVE.—In the moral universe there is but one true life, and that is the life of love.

AFFLICTION.—The more fiercely the billows beat upon the shore, the more the pebbles are rounded and polished; the more the diamond is cut, the more brilliant it becomes. Afflictions are the billows that polish souls for the temple of eternity, they are the instruments that make them sparkle as diamonds in the heavens above.

THE HOLINESS OF CHRIST.—Christ has regenerated millions, and will regenerate millions more, because of the *holiness* of His character. Because He is “above” them, He rolls His moral thunders down to alarm the careless; pours His sunbeams to quicken the dead; rains His fertilizing showers to make moral deserts blossom as the rose. As the well-being of the earth depends upon the heavens, so the spiritual progress of humanity depends upon that Character that is stretched over us like the sunny skies.

TRUTH IN CONSCIOUSNESS.—Truth in the Bible is “a lamp” without; truth in consciousness is a star within. The lamplight has fallen on millions that have lived and died morally in the dark. But this “morning star” of consciousness is a certain harbinger of a glorious day. As sure as it shines, the sun is on its march and it shall rise. Its beams shall soon skirt the

horizon and play upon the summits of the holy hills. It shall not pause until it reach the meridian, and pour its rays over the whole hemisphere of soul, thawing every fountain of the heart into love, quickening every latent germ into life, and making the whole beautiful as Eden, and as fruitful as the garden of the Lord.

SELF-RULE.—The man who has gained a sovereignty over himself, who has all his impulses and faculties at his command, has a wonderful relief in suffering. Such a man has a power to steel to some extent his nerves, close his senses, and argue away his pains. By the power of calm reflection he can make the darkest night of his sufferings burn with stars. Like the Æolian harp, he can turn the fiercest tempests into music.

CONFESSION.—A penitential confession of sin is the way to roll off the burden of guilt, and to remove the deepest sorrows of the soul.

SOUL GROWTH.—Widely grew the branches of those old cedars, offering to the traveller a cooling shade from the sun and a shelter from the tempest. How a divinely formed soul expands! It outgrows the boundaries of sects and the limit of creeds.

THE PROGRESS OF TRUTH.—Remedial truth was shut up in the breast of one lonely man, and He the son of a Jewish

peasant. But what has it become? The solitary seed covers many acres with precious grain; the little spring has swollen into a majestic river, bearing on its bosom the soul of the world to a higher civilization, a purer faith, and a diviner morality.

THE POWER OF SYMPATHY.—Genuine sympathy, too deep and strong for words,—that shakes the frame and unseals fountains of tears,—this is the balm to heal the broken heart.

WORSHIP.—There should be worship in all—in the farm, in the market, in the school, in all the scenes of recreation and enjoyment. Worship, not as a passing sentiment, not as an occasional service, but worship as an all-permeating and pre-dominating spirit. Men should tread the soil with reverent step, feeling that all is holy ground.

THE VIRTUOUS DESIRE.—Vast and eternal is the distinction between a desire for *goodness* and a desire for *happiness*. The one is sacred, the other is selfish; the one is virtuous, the other is vile. The man who searches after heaven as an end, will never find holiness, nor indeed heaven either. Whereas the man who searches after holiness as an end, will find it and heaven too.

VIRTUOUS SINCERITY consists not only in being what we appear to be, but being what we ought to be.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY is good in its influence. On this earth nothing is so useful to men as a Christly life. It is the preserving "salt," the refreshing stream, the life-giving light. One real Christly life is of more value to mankind than

all the speculations of philosophy, all the enactments of legislation, all the achievements of war.

SILENCE.—Conscious presence of Infinite Greatness would strike the soul with an awe that would restrain all utterance. Conscious presence of Infinite Perfection would surprise the whole being with that adoring rapture that will hush the voice and preclude all noisy speech. Such silence as this indeed is golden. Were the Eternal to be consciously felt by the race to-day, all the human sounds that fill the air and that din the ears of men would be hushed into profoundest quiet. The time hastens when all will be speechless, "when every mouth will be stopped."

GOOD WISHES are often like sentimental music—pleasant, but of no practical worth.

SIN AND SUFFERING.—From the eternal laws of moral mind, man cannot commit a wrong act without the infliction of an injury upon the soul, without blinding the judgment, deadening the sensibility, curtailing the liberty, drying up the affection, enfeebling the will.

THE SELFISH ALONE ANXIOUS ABOUT FUTURITIES.—Although the doctrine of Annihilists seems to us alike unscriptural and unphilosophic, and that of eternal misery inconsistent with our primitive beliefs respecting the character of the Creator, and repugnant to the deepest sentiment of our nature, we feel that we ought not dogmatically to pronounce on either of them. The Bible is obviously indistinct on the subject; and religion does not require that on it we should

have a clear assurance. The obligation to be religious is utterly independent of heaven or hell.

DEATH, ITS NEARNESS.—Our fathers, marvelling to see how suddenly men are and are not, compared life to a dream in the night, to a bubble in the water, to a ship on the sea, to an arrow that never rests till it falls; to a player who speaks his part upon the stage, and straight he gives place to another; to a man who comes to the market to buy one thing and sell

another, and then is gone home again. So the figure of this world passes away. This is our life! While we enjoy it, we lose it. As Jacob said that his years had been few, so we may say that our days shall be few.

FRIENDSHIP.—We are so constituted that in great afflictions we instinctively look for the sympathy of friends. We look for it as earnestly as the bewildered mariner looks for the guiding star, as the nocturnal sufferer for the light of day.

PREACHER.—It is a great source of encouragement to the preacher to feel that he has conscience on his side. He does not feel it necessary to stop at every stage that he may build up a laboured argument as to the truth of the positions which he has laid down or announced; he is not compelled to be for ever busy with the process of demonstration, as though what he uttered had no self-evidencing power, but must be fenced about with an array of credentials, or he could not otherwise look to gain assent to its truthfulness. He knows that the message which he delivers carries with it its own proof; so that while he might be casting about for methods by which to introduce it and secure for it an attentive and impartial hearing, it has gone straightway into the recesses of the mind, and there extorted a confession, however unwillingly rendered, and however speedily forgotten, of its being precisely such as the Almighty might be expected to send.—*Melville.*

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books ; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST ON EARTH. TWELVE LECTURES. BY SAMUEL HARRIS. London : Dickenson and Higham.

These lectures, we are informed, " were delivered to the students of Andover Theological Seminary in December, 1870. All except one of them have since appeared in the " *Bibliotheca Sacra*." They are now published in a volume in accordance with the desire expressed to the Author by persons in whose judgment he has confidence, and in the form in which they were originally delivered."

The work contains twelve lectures, the subjects of which are " The Idea of Christ's Kingdom on Earth in itself and in its History ; The Antagonism of Christ's Kingdom to the World, or the Kingdom of Satan ; The Peculiarity of Christian Virtue, involved in the fact that it is the Result of Redemption ; The Divine Agency in the Establishment, Administration, and Triumph of Christ's Kingdom ; The Church the Organic Outgrowth of the life-giving Grace of Christ ; The Necessity and Characteristics of the Human Agency in advancing Christ's Kingdom ; The Sacrificial Love of Christ the Type and Measure of Christian Love ; The Christian Law of service ; Characteristics of the Growth of Christ's Kingdom ; The Progress of Christ's Kingdom in its Relation to Civilization ; The Scriptural Doctrine of the Triumph of Christ's Kingdom distinguished from Millenarianism ; The progress of Christ's Kingdom in its Relation to the Spirit of the present Age."

Few books lately have fallen into our hands equal to this in philosophic grasp, freshness of thought, beauty, and force of expression. It is in every way a masterly work. It abounds with passages brilliant in thought and majestic in rhetoric. We quote the following passages, which are selected at random, as examples of the contents of this able work.

" Christianity must meet the thinking and life of each age. Christianity must be known experimentally. We must take Christ's yoke, in order to learn of Him. We must be willing to do His will in order to know the doctrine. Every one must both receive the truth as it is in

Jesus, and not as it has been in other men ; and receive it in his own experience and its adaptation to his own wants, and not in the experience of others and its adaptation to their wants. The food which one has eaten is necessarily excrementitious to another. The conditions and wants of different individuals and successive generations are varying and transient, though the truth remains unchanged. In order to preserve the doctrinal purity of Christianity in the thinking of any age, and its power in the life, it must meet the thinking and life of that age. Christianity must bring the same unchanging Christian truth ; but it must bring it, not as Athanasius thought it for his day, nor as Augustine thought it for his day, nor as Thomas à Kempis, Calvin, and Edwards thought it respectively for theirs ; but in the channels and methods of modern thought, and touching the topics on which modern thought is occupied. The Christian life produced is not the life of the ancient hermits and monks, nor of Calvin at Geneva, nor of the Puritans of the seventeenth century, nor of the Methodists of the eighteenth. It is the life of this age transfigured by the Christian faith and love. . . . In the type of mind of which the Jew is the representative, the intuitive or faith faculty predominates over the logical, and the mind is awed in the presence of the unseen, the incomprehensible, and the infinite ; the moral predominates over the speculative and scientific, and the man is awed before the Divine law, crushed with the sense of guilt and the expectation of punishment, terrified before the inexorable Judge to whom he must give account of every secret of his life. From these impressions, with which his soul trembles, he passes to believe the reality of the infinite and the unseen, as easily as from impressions on the eye and ear he passes to believe the reality of the outward world. The world unseen is real to him ; he expects it to manifest itself supernaturally ; he is prepared to hear voices from heaven, to see spirits and visions. Miracles occasion no difficulty of belief ; he regards them as the legitimate evidences of communications from the world unseen, and demands more. Nature itself he regards as a constant manifestation of the supernatural. It is God who thunders, who sends the wind and the rain. The Jewish literature in the Old Testament contains little argument or speculative philosophy. It is mainly historical and prophetic pictures of God's action in history, with the legislation for a theocracy, with moral law, an order of worship, and devotional poetry. In the Greek type of mind, on the contrary, the senses, the faculties of observation, and the logical powers predominate. Nature was so near to the Greek as to exclude the supernatural. His gods were the powers of nature personified. To the Jewish mind man is Divine, and nature is for his use. The Hebrew literature opens with the sublime proclamation that man is above nature, appointed to possess and use its resources and powers. The thinking of the Greek scarcely rises to this grand conception. To him nature is Divine, and man is its servant and worshipper. His thinking is a philosophy, elaborating by logical processes a system of the universe, starting sometimes with fire or water or some material

principle. In this type of mind the æsthetic element predominates over the moral, the sense of beauty displaces the sense of obligation, and joy in the present displaces the sense of what ought to be the consciousness of sin and the foreboding of judgment. To this type of mind nature is all-sufficient; miracles, instead of being helps to faith, are themselves its greatest difficulty. Accordingly, in the education of the race the Greek has contributed philosophical inquiry and scepticism, logic, art, and, if not physical science, the type of thought from which science comes."

SELECT THOUGHTS ON THE MINISTRY AND THE CHURCH, ETC., GATHERED FROM THE LITERATURE OF ALL TIMES. By Rev. DR. DAVIES. London: W. Tegg & Co., Cheapside.

We should like to see a new order of literary men established in this country, an order that might be denominated *Literary Gleaners*. The number of books now has become so enormous and are multiplying so rapidly every year, that it is impossible even for men of the greatest leisure to make themselves properly acquainted with even one per cent. of their contents. Although the great bulk contains more clay than ore, more chaff than grain, in each volume it is reasonable to suppose that there is something valuable, some seed worth cultivating, some idea that may quicken thought, solve the problems, and lift some spirit into a life and beauty. Hence the importance of *Literary Gleaners*. These men, however, should be duly qualified. They should have eyes to see the true thing, and hearts to love it. They should be not only good winnowers, giving nothing but the grain, but good judges of the grain, selecting only the best. Several men of late years have tried their hand at this work with more or less success. The author of the work before us, had we the power, we would ordain to that order, although perhaps he has not shown the highest qualifications. He has gone to too many inferior authors; he should have gleaned, at first anyhow, in the fields of the great masters. Nor does he always make the best selections from the field he gleans. We can say this, not only from his treatment of the works of others, but from the numerous selections he has taken from our humble productions. He must be either not extensively acquainted with our writings, or not in sympathy with what we appreciate most. Notwithstanding all this, he has produced a most valuable volume, and we shall be glad to find that he pursues the literary path he has commenced. It is one in which he can be extensively useful and find abundant encouragement.



A HOMILY

ON

All Things Working Together for Good.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.”—ROM. viii. 28.

THIS text declares that God has so disposed His providential arrangements that all the phenomena and occurrences incidental to the lives of His faithful servants shall combine to work out their ultimate advantage; it would seem, moreover, by implication, to announce a special, a personal, and an individual interposition of the Divine guidance and assistance whenever such special interference becomes necessary. Not suspending, or reverting, or in any way deranging the laws of nature which are His ministers, but overruling and controlling all things for the final and eventual advantage of the righteous. From this doctrine, however, there are many dissentients.

The most plausible, if not the most formidable argument usually employed against any special and individual intervention of Providence, on behalf of those who obey and

trust in Him, is that which involves the evidence of external facts, which appeals to daily and palpable experience, which derides those who humbly but steadfastly take their stand beneath the ruling and the overruling Providence of a Heavenly Father, asking them tauntingly, What have you to show for all your prayers for the Divine guidance and protection? What result has come of all your petitions for that special and personal interposition which all prayer implies? What difference has it made? To what purpose have you cradled yourself in this vain illusion, in this fantastic expectation that the Divine purposes and the prescribed course of destiny can in the smallest degree be modified or affected one way or another by your supplications? You that are in the habit of appealing to Providence, are you any better off than those who in silence take things as they come? Or if the temperance of your lives, the integrity of your dealings, the good esteem of your fellow citizens, may have done much towards exempting yourselves and many other pious people from several vexations which the godless have brought down upon themselves, still, with regard to the ordinary exigences and the daily vicissitudes of life, what privilege of security do you enjoy? Have fraud, misfortune, sickness, or the risks of commerce kept aloof? Has misinterpretation, calumny, dishonour that you could not help? Has the fatal epidemic, plague, fever, pestilence, respected the sanctity of your threshold? Has death relented as he approached your hearth, and hurried on to desolate only that of unbelievers? Nay, when you have desired to escape from any calamity that seemed to be impending, have you not had recourse to precisely the same human measures for cure or for prevention, as are resorted to by the most inflexible denier of any special intervening Providence? What then? Like him,—no more, no less,—you incur every ill that flesh

is heir to. Like him you have recourse to every antidote that experience prescribes, and yet you say that all things work together for good to them that love God; in other words, that God so arranges and adjusts His providential dispensations that they shall in a special manner and degree promote the advantage of His faithful people, as distinguished from all others.

Before attempting to answer this, there is one particular which ought to be cleared up. The whole force of this objection rests upon the assumption that those who acknowledge and obey God undergo just as much temporal calamity as other people, and that, therefore, it is preposterous to say that all things work together for their good. But has it never occurred to the casuist whom we are supposing, to reflect that he may be making a confusion between the ultimate advantage of those of God's servants whom He sees fit to subject to discipline, and the present exemption from trial which some of them enjoy? Is it not sometimes forgotten that there is a future economy in prospect, which cannot be put out of calculation in speculating on the privileges of God's faithful people? Let our casuist ask himself candidly if he may not have fallen into this very common mistake—the mistake, namely, of not sufficiently distinguishing between temporal convenience and eternal security. The Scriptures nowhere make this confusion between the two, as if present comfort and eternal bliss were convertible terms, which might be substituted one for the other without altering the sense of either. The Scriptures nowhere promise that all things shall work together for the present ease and comfort, and for the exemption from every pain, and sorrow, and distress, and trial of God's faithful children. On the contrary, we read that “many are the troubles of the righteous;” and we are taught that there are times and circumstances when medicine is more needful than food, and bitter

medicine more suitable than sweet. But what the scriptures do say is, that all things shall work together for the ulterior good of the faithful. Our own fond dreams and anticipations of prosperity are usually made up of robust health, of competent income, of gratified ambition, of professional promotion, of the affection and esteem of men and women that are round about us, and the acquisition of "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends." In place of these it may be that you have encountered some more some fewer of the "whips and scorns of time;" baffled endeavours, defeated expectations, mortified vanity, constitutions broken up by natural decay, domestic distress, financial ruin. Your whole future irretrievably clouded. "Was ever sorrow like my sorrow?" You may have exclaimed, "was ever destiny so pitiless?"

But wait. Wait till you have learned that it was not inexorable Fate, but the foresight of a paternal Providence that ordained this trial as the precise one which your case and peculiar moral constitution required. I do not believe that it is in the power of any individual or of any nation to deny that the greatest apparent calamities, disasters, and humiliations may have been, or may yet prove to be, in the long run, the most fortunate and the most advantageous occurrences that could possibly, in God's farsighted Providence, have been arranged for them. Wait till, having learned to bow before the discipline with filial meekness, that discipline has begun to take its intended and legitimate effect, detaching you from that pursuit of shadows in which so many are engaged; purging you from self and all sordid influences; teaching you to appraise at their respective and comparative values the transient comforts of earth and the infinite blessedness of heaven, till by degrees you become acclimatized for eternity; and then you will no longer hesitate to admit that sweet are the uses of adversity,

and it will no longer seem a paradox to say that all things work together for the good of those who love God.

Having put in then this precaution, namely, that we are not to make a confusion between *ultimate* good and the mere exemption from trouble of a quiet uneventful life, let us proceed for a few moments to the argument sometimes so triumphantly alleged, namely, that since precisely the same troubles fall upon him who believes and him who disbelieves,—or rather upon him who keeps up communion with God in prayer and him who neglects to do so,—it becomes absurd to say that these trials work in one direction for the man of prayer and in another for the man that never prays; and that circumstances, good or evil, work together for the advantage of the righteous in any sense which is not equally true of others.

I apprehend, however, that the regular and consistent life of a Christian man—the temperance, the integrity, the self-control, the good repute which will result from his convictions, will tend—will at least tend to obtain for him many temporal comforts which they will not always absolutely ensure; and will at least tend to alleviate for him many evils from which they cannot guarantee an absolute immunity. Godliness has in a considerable degree, though within certain limitations, the promise of the life that now is, and also of that which is to come. But still it can hardly be denied that for the most part the sunshine, the darkness, and the cloud appear to be dispensed in this world pretty much alike to the just and the unjust, according to their various sorts and conditions; and this is put forward as negating the assertion that God makes any distinction in His dealings with the just and the unjust. There is, however, a fallacy here which you cannot but instantly perceive. The same agency

brought into contact with different objects will produce totally different effects. A lighted taper inserted into a phial of one kind of gas, will burn with the utmost brilliancy and beauty; in another phial, charged with a different kind of gas, that same taper will become extinguished in fetid and offensive smoke, and in a third it would produce an instantaneous and violent explosion. So the same calamity—sickness, bereavement, commercial disaster—will awaken in one man a slumbering conscience, will drive another to distraction, and a third it will draw nearer to God than ever; so that, whilst it is literally and undeniably true that the same calamities (except such as are the direct consequences of our own voluntary acts) come alike upon the good and evil, it is a transparent fallacy to infer that the same ulterior results will follow in both cases. It is a fallacy, practically speaking, that the same visitation retains its nature and character under totally different circumstances and applied to different objects. It is a fallacy to maintain that a curse may not remain a curse, or be transformed into a blessing, according as it is piously accepted as a salutary discipline or rebelled against as a wanton and arbitrary infliction. It is on the temper of the recipient that the result depends, and whether or not all things, good or ill, concur to his advantage. Indeed is it not so throughout moral and material nature and the experience of human life? Does it not depend upon the use you make of anything, whether it becomes to you a blessing or a curse? Let me invite your attention to an illustration.

Beneath the petals of a graceful and familiar flower is secreted a sedative poison, of such quality that it will frequently steep a man in such a slumber as only the last trumpet can awake him from. This you at once recognise as opium. You cannot cause water to boil for the most ordinary culinary purpose, but you disengage an

element most formidable, the most irresistible power of expansion. This is steam. No summer passes over you, but you see the lightning tear the sky across as if it were a scroll of paper. This is electricity. These three agents, electricity, steam, and poison, to the mind of an untutored savage, are nothing but instruments of death. He can extract from them nothing but terror and destruction. But subject them to the investigation and manipulation of a man of science, and see what takes place. In that deadly narcotic he detects the principle of morphine; he compounds it with suitable ingredients, and converts it into one of the most inestimable and indispensable preparations in the pharmacopœia. From death he extracts life. In steam he snatches, as it were, from the hand of nature one of her most gigantic powers, and compels it to become the most obedient and the most versatile of his servants. It descends with him to caverns that have been scooped out far beneath the bed of ocean. It scales with him the loftiest summits. To the Alpine mountain it says, "Be thou removed," and to the obstruction at Suez, "Be thou cast into the sea." It whirls round and round in his complicated machines, and makes for him fabrics the most intricate and varied that the most fantastic imagination can devise. Nay, the very lightning he enlists and disciplines into an obedient recruit; and along an almost imperceptible thread, traversing the profoundest abysses of the sea, he commands the electric fluid to carry his thought—a thought conceived only a moment ago—in another moment to the extremities of the earth, and in an instant compels a man ten thousand miles off to think of what he himself is thinking. And in such wise is all this true of all these forces and many more, that while to the uncultured savage they are agents of death and objects of terror, they are working together for the comfort and benefit of him who has learned how

to use them. They adorn his life, they enrich it, they prolong it, and in every way make it, at least in material respects, a little better worth having. Such is a faint, but not unfaithful, illustration of the way in which the same occurrence,—I am speaking now of occurrences of a painful character,—may act with diametrically opposite results upon the practical Christian and upon the man who lives without God in the world. In the godless exciting rebellion and hardness of heart, and in the Christian pointing to filial submission, confiding holiness, and life eternal; forasmuch as all things,—all things,—work together for the good of them that are true to God. Perhaps the most satisfactory evidence of the reality of the working of this principle would be derived from an appeal to the actual experience of persons devoutly and religiously disposed, who are placed in circumstances of trial. We cannot cite them hither; but it is notorious to all who are conversant with such matters, that amongst such sufferers you may at any moment witness the reality of the paradox of the apostle, “As dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor. vi. 9).

Of the grand maxim that he has bequeathed to us, St. Paul himself was the living illustration. From the outward, the temporal, the Epicurean point of view, what life could be less enviable than his? To the advocates of Fatalism disguised under the plausible and specious name of an “immutable” Providence—to the scoffers at the notion of a paternal, individual, and peculiar Providence—must not the words of the great Apostle sound like the ravings of an insane fanaticism? What is it that he says? “All things work together for his good”? His good! Why, when was so pitiable a target for the

arrows of outrageous fortune? All things concurrent to his advantage! What! his infirmities—his besetting temptations, the asperities of his rugged nature, his disappointments, his perils, his shipwrecks, his imprisonment, his persecutions, without truce or relaxation? The snares of his avowed enemies; the distrust of many of the Christians; the machination of false brethren; the implacable detestation of the Jews; the indifference of the Romans; the ridicule of the Greeks. His ministry interrupted, his back livid with the scourge, his limbs loaded in chains, his two years' captivity at Rome, from which he was released only in the way that the scaffold sets men free—if he ever cherished such a fond enthusiastic dream, as that Divine Providence ever interposes to adjust the welfare of His children, will not all these adversities now at length have undeceived him? Surely he has had enough suffering to teach him that the chariot of God rolls onward along its imperial way, without any stoppage for inquiry about the several circumstances of the poor travellers that it passes on the road. But, no; there is not even a momentary symptom of any such misgiving. The apostle had learned the secret of distilling the sweetest essences from the most repulsive ingredients. From every trial he extracts nutriment for sustaining a more steadfast faith, a more fervid hope, a more expansive charity. He cries with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And his unflinching faith in Christ directing all things, whether apparently good or apparently evil,—all things,—into the current of the ultimate blessedness of His people, reaches perhaps its climax in the celebrated apostrophe, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" etc. (Rom. viii. 35).

Your own trials and sorrows, of whatever kind, past, present, or to come, will suggest a much more effective

personal application of the subject than I have the ingenuity to contrive. There is not one but has suffered, is suffering, or will have to suffer, something or other, which will put to trial this confidence in Him who stands pledged to make all things work together for the good of His people. I will but invite you in conclusion to remember where it was that St. Paul acquired his immovable and steadfast faith. It was at the foot of the Cross—a phrase, perhaps, sometimes employed with little distinct meaning; but by the foot of the Cross, I mean a position and a point of view which at once invited and facilitated a survey of the Divine Saviour's career, of which the Cross,—the emblem of self-sacrifice,—was the most expressive and the most culminating symbol. It was in looking up to that Cross that Paul acquired and fortified his faith—that Cross which once had been the symbol of the lowest infamy, but which, through Christ's patient endurance and unreserved self-sacrifice, even unto death, has become a symbol of transcendent honour. That Cross, that once occupied the nadir of shame, is exalted now to the zenith of glory. At the foot of the Cross St. Paul had learned the great doctrine of self-abnegation: that he who is content to lose his life in the cause of truth shall save it, and that much tribulation is the gate to an infinite blessedness. At the foot of that Cross he was reminded that his Master had sustained every trial by which constancy can possibly be tested. Yes, every kind of trial, moral, spiritual, and material, culminating in what comprised them all, the Cross. Yet that all these sufferings had worked together to bring Jesus Christ through the grave and gate of death to the right hand of God, where He remains exalted, far above every name of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. Into that august Presence we believe that His faithful apostle has since followed

Him, and thither may you also follow Him through the operation of that Spirit which makes all things work together for the eventual good of those who love God in His Son Jesus Christ.

W. H. BROOKFIELD, M.A.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this *TEHELIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *HOMILETIC* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ARGUMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is among the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The Religion of Man.

“The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken,” etc.—*PSALM* l. 1–15.

HISTORY.—This psalm is entitled “*A Psalm of Asaph.*” There are no less than twelve psalms attributed to him, and this is the first of them. Asaph was a famous musician, and one of the chief leaders of the Temple choir. His sons also seem to have been famed as Temple choristers. Genius, as well as stupidity, is often transmitted from sire to son. Some suppose because certain events mentioned in the Psalms which are ascribed to him took place after his death, that all which bear his name are not his composition. The title, rendered in the margin, “for Asaph” means either that it was composed by him or by some one else for his use, as the leader of the Temple band. There is nothing in the poem to indicate the particular occasion of its

composition. It has no allusions either to names or circumstances of any particular time or place by which certainty can be reached as to its date.

ANNOTATIONS : Ver. 1.—“*The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken.*”

The Septuagint and Vulgate make this “The God of gods, the Lord.” De Wette renders it “God, God Jehovah speaks.” Prof. Alexander, “The Almighty God, Jehovah speaks,” and remarks that the word “mighty” is not an adjective agreeing with the next word, but a substantive in apposition with it. The idea is, that He who speaks is the true God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. It is *that* God who has a right to call the world to judgment, and who has power to execute His will. “*And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*” Not Israel alone, but all humanity in all places, is concerned in the revelation about to be made.

Ver. 2.—“*Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.*” He comes forth in a splendid and imposing manner, from His royal residence, the seat of the theocracy, which is described as perfectly beautiful, not only in a moral and spiritual sense, but in reference also to its lofty situation, celebrated in Psalm xlviii. 2. The Hebrew verb is borrowed from the sublime theophany in Deut. xxxiii. 2. See also Ps. lxxx., xciv. 1.”—*Alexander.*

Ver. 3.—“*Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.*” The imagery is borrowed from the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai (Exod. xix. 16; xx. 18). Fire is a common emblem of God’s vindicatory justice (Deut. xxxii. 22 ; 2 Thess. i. 8).

Ver. 4.—“*He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.*” He will summon heaven and earth as witnesses in the judgment of His people. The heavens and the earth are put for the Universe, and they are His witnesses in this great judicial transaction.

Ver. 5.—“*Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.*” “Who make a covenant with Me over sacrifice.”—*Delitzsch.*

Ver. 6.—“*And the heavens shall declare His righteousness: for God is judge Himself. Selah.*” “And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for Elohim purposeth to sit in judgment. Selah.”—*Delitzsch.* As God Himself will be judge, His acts of judgment will be approved by the universe as just.

Ver. 7.—“*Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.*” The Almighty Himself now speaks. He expostulates with Israel on account of its religious formalism, and demands thankfulness, obedience, and prayer.

Ver. 8.—“*I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me.*” Here God implies that Israel

brought the sacrifices regularly enough ; but what He complains of is the lack of inward service.

Ver. 9.—“*I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.*” Bullocks were offered regularly in the Hebrew services as sacrifices. Jehovah here declares that He had no need of such offerings. And in the following verses He declares His utter independency of all such offerings.

Ver. 10, 11, 12.—“*For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains : and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell thee : for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.*” “For Mine is every beast of the forest, the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and that which moveth on the meadows is with Me. If I were hungry I would not tell thee, for Mine is the world and its fulness.”—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 13.—“*Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?*” This is said to show the utter absurdity of supposing that He required any such sacrifices.

Ver. 14, 15.—“*Offer unto God thanksgiving : and pay thy vows unto the Most High : and call upon Me in the day of trouble : I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.*” Here is the religion the Almighty requires and the blessedness He attaches thereto.

ARGUMENT.—The object of this psalm is to set forth the transcendent importance of religion, and the abhorrence of the Almighty to mere ceremonial worship.

HOMILETICS.—The grand subject of these words,—and indeed of the whole psalm,—is the *religion of man*. Man is essentially a religious being. The religious element underlies his spiritual constitution, and influences the whole of his history. There is no soul, perhaps, without some god ; and the god is the moral monarch of his being. The verse suggests two thoughts concerning the religion of man :—

I. A SOLEMN JUDGMENT AWAITS the religion of man. The religions of mankind are immensely various ; some are genuine and some are spurious ; but in all cases they await a testing day. Observe several things here concerning this coming judgment of man’s religious character,—

First : Its *Author*. Who is to judge it ? “The mighty God, even the Lord.” “The names of God are here heaped up in order to gain a thoroughly full-toned exordium for the description of Him as the Judge of the world.” This judge is *Omniscient*, and cannot be deceived. He is *absolutely*

righteous, and cannot swerve from justice. He reads the heart, He knows what is in man. "Just and right is He." Before Him all must one day stand. Observe,—

Secondly : Its *Witnesses*. "He hath called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof." The whole universe will witness the judicial process. All holy moral intelligences are interested in the cause of justice, truth, and benevolence, and they will agree with the divine sentence. Observe—

Thirdly : Its *Grandeur*. "Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence : a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people." The Eternal seems now at a distance ; but He shall come into *conscious contact* with every human soul. He seems now silent ; souls deafened by sin hear not His voice, but He will speak in thunder to them in the coming day. He seems now a nonentity, or at most a mere name, but He will appear everything on that day. "It shall be very tempestuous round about Him," etc. He will call to the heavens from above, He will move the universe, the whole creation will appear as a mere toy in His hand. Observe,—

Fourthly : Its *Officers*. "Gather My saints together unto Me ; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Who are the officers ? He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. "Gather My saints ;" what a gathering ! From whence ? To whom ? What for ? Observe,—

Fifthly : Its *Rectitude*. "The heavens shall declare His righteousness." All this confessedly metaphorical representation of a judicial period is intended undoubtedly to convey the solemn general truth that every man's religion will one day be tried as by fire. We may deceive ourselves, as well as others now ; but the undeceiving period draweth near, and a period of inexpressible solemnity it will be to us all.

The verses suggest,—

II. THE WORTHLESSNESS OF MERE CEREMONY in the religion of man. Amongst all the minor differences which exist in the religions of mankind, there is one distinction that is fundamental, and that is referred to here, which is the distinction between the merely ceremonial and the genuinely spiritual, the religion of form and the religion of the heart. “Hear, O my people, and I will speak : O Israel, and I will testify against thee : I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before Me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds,” etc. In relation to this mere ceremonial religion, God is here represented as condemning it. “I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee : for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.” (1) You can give Him nothing in your offerings. All belongs to Him, all is His property. “Of Thine own have we given Thee.” Why attach worth, therefore, to any of your outward offerings ; it is not yours, all is God’s. He is not to be worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything. (2) He requires nothing. “Will I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats ?” Unlike all other beings in the universe, God’s life is not sustained by appropriation. He is absolutely independent. This was a supposition, which, when it was stated in a formal manner, must have been seen at once to be absurd ; and hence the emphatic question in this verse. “It may serve to illustrate this also, that, among the heathen, the opinion did undoubtedly prevail, that the gods ate and drank what was offered to them in sacrifice : whereas the truth was that these things were consumed by the priests who attended on heathen altars and conducted the devotion of heathen temples, and who found that it contributed much to their own support, and did much to secure the liberality of the people, to

keep up the impression that what was thus offered was consumed by the gods. God appeals here to His own people in this earnest manner because it was to be presumed that they had higher conceptions of Him than the heathen had; and that, enlightened as they were, they could not for a moment suppose these offerings necessary for Him.”—*Barnes*.

The verses suggest,—

III. THE VALUE OF RIGHT-HEARTEDNESS in the religion of man. “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High, and call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” Observe three things. Observe,—

First: The *nature* of spiritual religion. (1) Hearty *gratitude*. “Offer unto God thanksgiving.” Why does the Almighty wish us to thank Him? Not because our thanksgiving is of any service to Him; the hallelujahs of the universe cannot heighten His glory or augment His blessedness; but (a) Because it is *right*. It is right that His moral creatures should appreciate the favours He bestows upon them. (β) Because it is *necessary*—necessary to their own *virtue*. Gratitude lies at the root of all virtues. Necessary to their *happiness*. Genuine thankfulness of heart to God is the paradise of spirits. Heaven is praise. (2) Hearty *vows*. “Pay thy vows unto the Most High.” Resolve to love, worship, and obey the great God; and in genuine earnestness carry out the vows in daily life. “Pay thy vows.” Souls rise by holy resolutions; resolutions are the rungs in the ladder of soul progress. (3) Hearty *prayer*. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble.” Call with thine own voice, in thine own language, from thy own heart. “In everything, by prayer and supplication, make known thy wants unto God.” Observe,—

Secondly: The *advantages* of spiritual religion. (1) Divine deliverance. “I will deliver thee.” He will assuredly deliver the true who call upon Him out of all their distresses. (2) Divine approbation. “Thou shalt glorify Me.” That is, thou shalt honour Me. What a reward it will be, to have

the assurance that we have blessed and honoured our Maker.

CONCLUSION.—What is our religion? A mere thing of form, custom, or ceremony, that which is not merely the expression but the substitute of the true spirit of religion? If so, it behoves us at once to consider that all this is worse than worthless, and abhorrent to that Omniscient God into whose presence we shall soon be summoned. Ah, me! How much of the religion of Protestant England is mere form!

“Ceremony leads her bigots forth
Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth,
While truths on which eternal things depend,
Find not, or hardly find, a friend:
As soldiers watch the signal of command,
They learn to bow, to sit, to kneel, to stand;
Happy to fill religion’s vacant place
With hollow form, and gesture and grimace.”—*Cowper*.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God’s Holy Word.

Subject: Exalted Ideas of God and Humbling Ideas of Man.

“Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,” etc.—JOB xxv. 1–6.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS:—Ver. 1, 2.—“*Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, Dominion and fear are with Him.*” This means that the Almighty is the Universal Ruler, and as such should be regarded with

reverence and fear. "*He maketh peace in His high places.*" Up the infinite heights of the universe, amidst revolving worlds and systems He maintains peace. Though immense their magnitude, countless their multitudes, and incalculably swift their velocities, there is no clash or jar, all is harmony.

Ver. 3.—"*Is there any number to His armies?*" His angels are called the army of heaven (Dan iv. 35). The stars also are His hosts, which He bringeth out by number and calleth them all by their names. "*And upon whom doth not His light arise?*" If he refers to stars, there is no constellation or member of a constellation, however remote, on which His rays do not fall; or if to celestial intelligences, there is not one that lives not in His light.

Ver. 4.—"*How then can man be justified with God?*" How then can frail man be right with God? How can he think he has a right to find fault with the decrees of the Almighty, or challenge Him to enter into judgment with him, as Job had done? "*Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?*" Job himself had expressed the sentiment of these words (chap. iv. 17). Did Bildad mean to throw the question back for his own reflection, as if he believed Job maintained himself to be pure and holy?

Ver. 5.—"*Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight.*" Perhaps Bildad spoke these words to Job at night, when the moon shone in her brightness and the stars in their splendour. The idea he wishes to convey to Job is, that the purest objects in the universe are impure as compared with God.

Ver. 6.—"*How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?*" "A worm;" a miserable reptile, bred in and supported by putrescent substances. What is man to God? A mere insect, nothing more.

HOMILETICS.—In this chapter Bildad gives us,—

I. MOST EXALTED IDEAS OF GOD. He speaks of Him—

First: As the *head* of all authority. "*Dominion and fear are with Him.*" There are great authorities, mighty rulers of the universe; but from Him they all derive their power, and compared to Him they are nothing and vanity. He is the Most High: King of kings and Lord of lords. He speaks of Him,—

Secondly: As the *Maintainer* of all peace. "*He maketh peace in His high places.*" Who maintains the order of the stellar universe? Who maintains order amongst celestial intelligences? He is the God of peace. He is peaceful in His own nature, and peaceful in all His operations. He speaks of Him,—

Thirdly : As the *Commander* of all forces. “Is there any number of His armies?” What forces there are in the universe, material, mental, moral! They are all His hosts. He marshals and commands them all. He speaks of Him,—

Fourthly : As the *Fountain* of all light. “Upon whom doth not His light arise?” All light, in both the physical and spiritual realms of being, streams from Him as from the central fount. He is the Father of lights. He speaks of Him,—

Fifthly : As the *perfection* of all holiness. “How then can man be justified with God?” “Who is like the Lord our God, glorious in holiness?” etc.

In this chapter Bildad gives—

II. Most HUMBLING ideas of MAN. He represents him,—

First : As *morally degenerate*. “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” He seems to have had the idea of the Psalmist, who thought himself born in sin and shaped in iniquity. We need no Bible to tell us that we are morally degenerate, that man in honour abideth not. Morally he is in an abnormal state, like a sheep that has wandered from the fold. He represents him,—

Secondly : As *essentially insignificant*. He is a “worm.” How frail in body! He is crushed before the moth. Ay, and how frail in mind, too! How narrow his range of mental vision! How frail his intellectual powers! How weak in moral faculties—weak to resist the wrong and to pursue the right. Morally he is “without strength.”

CONCLUSION.—From this chapter two things are suggested.

First : *The glorious light of nature*. There is no reason to believe that Bildad had any special revelation from God. He was left to the light of nature and reason, albeit how grand are his conceptions of God, how true his ideas of man. “There is something truly sublime in this representation of the Supreme Ruler. His splendour darkens all; His radiant hosts are numberless; His light and purity surpass all created excellence; the heavenly bodies are eclipsed and retire before Him. Still greater is the disparity of man, whose impurity and meanness will not bear His inspection.”

Secondly : *The unsatisfactoriness of religious controversy.* Bildad here finishes a long, earnest and able controversy which he and the other two friends of Job had with him. They have exhausted their argumentative force, they appear no more on the scene. But what has been the effect of the whole on Job ? Not correction of mistakes, but great irritation and annoyance. And what was the effect of Job's arguments on them ? Equally unsatisfactory. One might have thought that as these honourable men had nothing more to say, in thus closing they would have acknowledged their error, and yielded the palm of victory to the patriarch. But this they did not. They retired from the scene unimproved either, perhaps, in intelligence or in temper ; and only mortified, it may be, at their non-success.

“ Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
 And make colloquial happiness your care,
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate—
 A duel in the form of a debate.
 The clash of arguments and jar of words,
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
 Decide no questions with their tedious length,
 (For opposition gives opinion strength)
 Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
 And put the peaceably disposed to death.
 Oh, thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
 Nor carp at every flaw you may discern ;
 Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
 I am not surely always in the wrong !
 'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
 A fool must now and then be right, by chance.
 Not that all freedom of dissent I blame.
 No ; there I grant the privilege I claim.
 A disputable point is no man's ground ;
 Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
 Discourse may want an animated “ No ! ”
 To brush the surface and to make it flow ;
 But still remember, if you mean to please,
 To press your point with modesty and ease.
 The mark at which my juster aim I take,
 Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
 Let your opinion, at whatever pitch,
 Knots and impediments make something hitch ;
 Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,

Your thread of argument is snapped again ;
The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
Vociferated logic kills me quite ;
A noisy man is always in the right.
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare ;
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly, ' To be sure ! ' ' No doubt ! ' "—*Cowper*.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are :—" Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; " Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; " Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; " Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; " The Gospel History," by Ebrard ; " Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; " St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee ; " Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner ; Lange ; etc., etc.

Subject: The Light of the World.

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."—JOHN viii. 12.

EXPOSITION : Ver. 12.—"*Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world : he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.*" This verse should perhaps chronologically follow the 52nd verse of the preceding chapter, for it is a continuation of that discourse. Some suppose that Christ, here speaking of Himself as the "light," alludes to the large, golden chandeliers in the court of the women of the Temple, the light of which illuminated the whole city. "He was," says Dr. Farrar, "seated at that moment in the Treasury—either some special building in the Temple so called, or that part of the court of the women which contained the thirteen chests with trumpet-shaped openings, called *shopherôth*, into which the people and especially the Pharisees used to cast their gifts. In this court and therefore close beside Him, were two gigantic candelabra

fifty cubits high and sumptuously gilded, on the summit of which nightly during the feast of tabernacles, lamps were lit which shed their soft light over all the city. Round these lamps the people, in their joyful enthusiasm, and even the stateliest priests and Pharisees, joined in festal dances ; while, to the sound of flutes and other music, the Levites, drawn up in array on the fifteen steps which led up to the court, chanted the beautiful psalms which early received the title of ‘Songs of Degrees.’ In allusion to these great lamps, on which some circumstance of the moment may have concentrated the attention of the hearers, Christ exclaimed to them, ‘I am the light of the world.’ It was His constant plan to shape the illustrations of His discourses by those external incidents which would rouse the deepest attention and fix the words most indelibly on the memories of His hearers.” Stier, however, thinks that the allusion is not to the light of the chandelier, but to that of the great sun itself. It might be so, for in the second verse of the chapter we are told that it was “early in the morning” that Christ came to the Temple. The festal lights of the Temple were probably extinguished, and the glorious sun was ascending the horizon and throwing his radiance upon the marble Temple, and He might have meant, What that sun which is now breaking upon us is to the earth, that, and more than that, am I to the whole sinful world.

“The glorious morn from height to height
Shoots the keen arrows of the light ;
And glorious in their central shower,
Palace of holiness and power,
The temple on Moriah’s brow
Looks a new-risen sun below.”

Elsewhere this same Evangelist calls Him the true “light.” The Logos is the true light. “All,” to use the language of another, “that has really enlarged the stock of intellectual truth or of moral goodness among men, all that has ever lighted any soul of man, has radiated from Him. He proclaims Himself to be the light of the world, and the truth : and His apostle speaking of the illumination shed by Him upon the Church, reminds Christians that the darkness is passing and the true Light now shineth.”

HOMILETICS.—Observe that Christ is the Light for the World, that is, the Light for humanity. *Κόσμος* stretches over all time as well as over all space. The lights of the candelabra only irradiated the Temple, or at most part of the city ; however effulgent, they left the surrounding regions in darkness. But Christ as a Light is not confined to a district but for the globe, not for a tribe but for the race, not for time but for all times, the Light of the World. His doctrines are fitted for

universal reason, His precepts for universal conscience, His provisions for universal needs. Christ is no more the property of any particular community or tribe than the natural sun is, He belongs to the race.

I. Christ, as a "Light" is WONDROUSLY REVEALING. Light is a revealing element. When the sun goes down and darkness reigns, the whole of the beautiful world is concealed, all on ocean and on land are hidden with a veil which no eye can pierce. The sun arises, and all stands forth distinctly to view. What does Christ reveal? God, a spiritual universe, a moral government, a future state of retribution, a remedial system by which fallen humanity can be restored to the knowledge, the image, the friendship, and the enjoyment of the eternal Father. Men have appeared here in different ages and regions who have been called lights. Prophets were lights; John the Baptist was called a light; the apostles were lights; some of the heathen sages were lights; and many of the modern philosophers and scientists may be called lights. But Christ is *the* Light. Other lights are borrowed; He is the original fountain. Other lights only reveal dimly a few things in some narrow space; He reveals all things fully through all regions of moral being. Other lights shone a little, and, like meteors, went out; He burns on for ever—the "Light of the world."

II. Christ, as a "Light," is HUMANITY GUIDING. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." The sun may shine in its noontide radiance, and yet men may walk in darkness; they may shut their eyes or keep in cells or caverns. It is so with Christ. Though He is the moral Sun of the world, the millions "walk in darkness." Christ is to be followed (1) *doctrinally*, (2) *ethically*, (3) *spiritually*. Men who follow Him thus, will always be in the "light."

III. Christ, as a "Light," is SPIRITUALLY QUICKENING. The natural sun is the fountain of life to the world; his beams quicken all. Christ is the Life of the world. "In Him was life." He quickens the *intellect*, the *conscience*, the *soul*. There is no spiritual life apart from Him.

CONCLUSION:—How great the obligation of the world to

Christ! What would this earth be without the sun? Its condition would be wretched beyond conception; and yet it would be better off than humanity without Christ. Were all that Christ has been to humanity, and still is, to be withdrawn, into what a Stygian condition it would sink. "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Germ of Thought.

Subject: God's Fire Men.

"Pulling them out of the fire."—JUDE 23.

NOTICE some of the suggestive points of resemblance between sin and the object used here to represent it—fire.

I. Sin is like fire because it is MYSTERIOUS. What is fire? Of what are its consuming properties composed? What weight, colour, size, or shape is it? No man can answer these questions. They are surrounded by mystery; and yet, so palpable is the evidence that there is such a thing as fire, that no sane man can deny it.

So sin is a mystery. What is it? How came it into existence in a universe made and governed by a Being of almighty intelligence, power, and love? *No man can answer these questions.* There are difficulties here which perhaps the mind of an archangel cannot solve. But however much mystery there may be about the origin and existence of sin, no sane man can deny that the terrible thing exists. We have seen its destructive work all around us, and, more convincing than all, we have felt its blighting and destructive flame in our own hearts.

II. Sin is like fire, because it exists in a TWOFOLD STATE,—it is active and latent. Fire in its active state illuminates our streets by night, flames in the conflagration, and sends its boiling energy through the locomotive. In its latent state fire

exists in every material object about us, even in the ice on our rivers.

So sin exists in an *active* and *latent* state. In its active state it flames out in acts of profanity and crime. It bursts out in schemes of political corruption and in acts of commercial dishonesty. Sin in its latent state is strikingly symbolized by latent fire. It slumbers in the heart of universal humanity; it *exists in every man* that cometh into the world. It only requires a few strokes of the steel of a rightly adjusted temptation, to cause the sparks to fly out upon the tinder of the sensibilities, and the whole man is ablaze. Latent sin in the heart of a child is something like latent fire in nature. At first it does not consume or destroy. Through the friction of temptation, however, it soon begins its destructive work, though not suspected perhaps by others. Like fire in a wood, it soon begins to char and destroy the roots and fibres of the moral nature, leaving the trees and saplings of truth and heavenly aspiration and virtue to run to ashes. This is the cause of those unlooked-for falls in society. A man's, a woman's character is ruined in an hour. The community stands astonished, and people say, "How sudden!" Not so sudden, if you knew the process. No man honestly trying to live a Christian life ever falls prostrate in an hour. Sin must burn awhile first in the shape of unholy thought and desire. There are men and women all around us who are ready to break into destructive flame at the first spark of temptation.

III. Sin is like fire because of its POWER TO ATTRACT. How a child likes to toy with fire! How unconscious of danger! What multitudes will be attracted by a conflagration! So every effort is made by the devil and his agents to make sin attractive and fascinating, more attractive than any scene of fireworks. Look at the drinking and gambling houses, and places of even darker repute, in our towns and cities. What efforts to attract and allure! Flowers festooning the very steps that lead to death and hell. Wit to amuse, beauty to attract, music to please, drink for the thirsty, and revelry for the reckless. Thousands of our young men are attracted to

those places ; and, ere they are aware of it, their wings and plumage are scorched and ruined, and they find themselves helplessly and, alas ! hopelessly, floundering in the polluting mire of their own appetites and passions.

IV. Sin is like fire because it is REGARDLESS OF THE WORTH OF WHAT IT CONSUMES. The most splendid mansions, the finest works of art, the grandest furniture, all consumed as worthless rubbish. So with sin. The man of noblest parts is the most tempting mark for the devil. The fine genius, the sympathetic heart, the eloquent tongue, are consumed as readily as the most worthless creatures. No conflagration so costly or disastrous as the burning down of a man. Acres of burning warehouses, a whole city in a blaze, not to be compared. I have seen it, and so have you. I have seen self-control give way, and self-respect give way, and public confidence give way, and love of home and friends give way, and even hope, the longest and strongest beam in the structure, give way, and the whole man collapse, a heap of worthless rubbish, surrounded by despair too wide to look beyond.

V. Sin is like fire because it must be RESISTED AND PUT OUT, OR IT WILL DESTROY ALL WITHIN ITS REACH. We have our fire companies to rally to the scene of danger. Waggon and appliances always in readiness, always listening for the alarm—great energy and effort put forth when duty calls. So God has His firemen. The different branches of the Church are His fire companies. Alas ! how foolish and dishonouring has been their conduct in the past ! Instead of “pulling them out of the fire,” some of these companies have entered into long debates as to how the fire could have started. One company comes forward, and with lordly bearing says, “Out of the way here, you presumptuous intruders. We are the only company properly credentialled and chartered for this work. You are only mock companies, and have no right to meddle with the work that God has given to *us exclusively* to accomplish.” Long arguments are wielded pro and con, while in the meantime the fire of sin has been consuming millions of souls. Oh, how it humiliates us, to read the record of the past

doings of the firemen of God ! May we learn a lesson from it for our future guidance ! Oblivious to all minor points and side issues, may we devote every power to the one all-important work of saving souls,—“pulling them out of the fire.”

THOS. KELLY.

Movers, N. Y.

Subject: Pastors and Teachers.

“Some pastors and teachers.”—EPHESIANS iv. 11.

WHEN Christ ascended on high it was a glorious triumph. Numerous and mighty were the foes He had conquered. Principalities and powers—Sin, Satan, Death, Hell, were all led captive.

Having died for His Church, He reigns to promote her interests. *For this* purpose He gave gifts unto men. *Not* to angels ; not to fallen angels, to convert them ; not to holy angels, to make them ministers in His Church.

For the benefit of His Church He has bestowed gifts upon all the disciples. These are very diversified, *but* all of one spirit, all given to profit withal ; that *Christians* may edify one another, by speaking often one to another ; that they may be helpers of each other's faith and unitedly strive together for the preservation and propagation of the Faith.

But amongst the benefits bestowed upon the Church the appointment of their ministers is chief. In the first age of the Church He gave extraordinary officers. He gave to some apostles. What were their qualifications ? They must have seen Christ. Have been called by Him. Immediately inspired. The power of working miracles. They could have no successors. Those who boast of being their successors should produce their credentials.

He gave to some, prophets—men whose office it was to unfold the meaning of the Old Testament, and to foretell future events, which of course required direct inspiration.

To some evangelists, who were companions of the apostles in travail. This is generally considered as one of the extraordinary offices which terminated when miracles ceased.

The only class of officers then appointed by Jesus Christ for the permanent instruction and oversight of His Churches are pastors and teachers, terms which designate only one office. These officers are elsewhere called elders, bishops, ministers. That the term Bishop in Scripture does not designate an officer of superior rank to a pastor, see Acts xx. 17-28, Phil. i. 1.

It is the exclusive right of Jesus Christ to appoint His ministers. It is He counts them faithful, putting them into the ministry. The ministry we have received of the Lord. No man can take this office on himself without committing the sin of Ury. He supplies the gifts which qualify them for this work. Makes them able ministers, able to win souls, etc. He regulates their movements, He holds the stars in His right hand and directs them where to shine (Acts xiii. 1, xvi. 6).

From Jesus, then, as Head of the Church, Churches should seek their ministers. As His gifts they should receive them, regarding them as His servants. "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves."

But how are Churches to know when pastors are the gift of Christ. He Himself supplies the test, "By their fruits ye shall know them." If they come from Him, they come in His spirit; they love the Master whom they serve; they bear His image. They bring His Gospel, they preach Christ crucified. Their doctrines you are to test; and if they bring to you any other doctrine than that which is in the word of God, receive them not.

How important, brethren, to the Church is a faithful ministry. How important to the world to have a faithful ministry.

Bolover.

J. H. C.

Subject: Lot's Wife a Beacon.

"Remember Lot's wife."—LUKE xvii. 32.

Lot's wife is one of the beacons of the Bible. Beacons are not to be looked at in idle and careless curiosity, but with an earnest gaze and for practical purposes. They point to the deeps of

perdition where men have been drowned; to the giddy heights off which they have slipped, over which they have toppled into the terrible destruction below. They tell of the calamities which, with the suddenness of an eagle's swoop, have come upon them as the result of their heedlessness, and wickedness, and folly. They do not speak in articulate speech, but their *silent* warning is more terrible than the mightiest sound could be. We have an illustration of this in the disciples being pointed to Lot's wife as a beacon. Our Lord tells us of the calamities with which Jerusalem will be visited; and instead of His shouting in their ears, saying, "Beware! lest you do not escape, but perish in that general overthrow," He simply says, "Remember Lot's wife." I need not waste words in proving that she is a beacon for us also. Let me ask you to "remember,"—

I. HER PRIVILEGES.

1. *Her marriage relationship.* Her husband feared the Lord. With all his moral weaknesses and faults, he was, on the whole, a godly man.

2. *She was warned of the destruction.* The angels warn Lot, his wife, and daughters. Threading his way through the blind multitude outside, Lot goes to warn his sons-in-law. They heeded not, but mocked, for they thought he was mocking them. He returns. The night passes. The morning dawns: and the angels "hastened Lot, saying, Arise, *take thy wife*," etc. But not only did the angels warn her to flee from the doomed city, but took hold of her and led her out of it. Here was Divine earnestness and compassion combined. Surely no member of that favoured family will hesitate or tarry a moment; but all with eager, onward look, "escape for their life!" It was not so. "Remember Lot's wife." Remember,—

II. HER PERVERSENESS.

Her perverseness is seen, 1, *In her reluctance to leave the doomed city.* Was it not enough that she should have been warned by angels, and who had authenticated their mission by working a miracle? No; that was not enough, for wicked

and corrupt as Sodom was, she did not wish to leave it, and so they must needs take hold upon her and lead her out perforce. Looked at on its *Divine side*, this act of the angels shows her *privilege*; but looked at on its *human side*, it proves her *perverseness*.

Her perverseness is seen, 2, *In her tarrying behind*. “She looked back *from behind*.” She did not keep pace with her husband and daughters. Do you account for this by bodily infirmity or fatigue? I cannot. (1) *An earnest soul energizes a weakly body*. Even the cripple can run in the time of peril with remarkable swiftness and alacrity. (2) *No mention is made of her physical infirmity*. It was her soul that loved Sodom (whether for its own sake, or because she had property or relatives there does not matter); that caused her to hesitate and halt. Here is a lesson for all who have started for heaven. Be in earnest, brother. Don’t lag behind. Keep pace with the swiftest. There is peril in the plain. By hesitating and tarrying many a man’s soul has become petrified. Her perverseness is seen—

3. *In her looking back*. “She looked back from behind.” (1) The backward look *betrayed weak faith*. Compare Luke ix. 59, with Heb. x. 38, 39. (2) The backward look *betrayed want of earnestness*. When the cry of “Fire!” is raised in any public building, what a rush there is to the doors! Who “looks back” until beyond danger? (3) The backward look *defied God*. The command was “Look not behind thee, neither stay in all the plain, lest thou be consumed.” He that defies God defies one stronger than himself. Who art thou to contend with the Almighty? Cannot Omnipotence crush a worm? If we dare God to destroy us, *He will do it*. “Remember Lot’s wife.”

III. HER PUNISHMENT: “She became a pillar of salt.” What does this mean? There are three theories respecting this punishment. 1. That literally she became a mass of rock-salt. 2. That the storm of fire which caught her, because of her lingering in the plain, encrusted her in sulphuric matter, partly composed of saline particles. 3. That she be-

came an everlasting memorial of the folly of disobedience. Accept which you like—you must admit that the punishment was awful. “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” What! is God never angry? Are you one of the modern Universalists? Is it not said that “the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.” Ah! God has often been provoked to anger, will be angry again. THE WRATH TO COME!—flee from it. Tarry not, look not back. “Remember Lot’s wife!”

E. D. SOLOMON.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS AND THE PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL MINISTER COMPARED.

“Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.”—EZRA i. 1, 2.

Cyrus, which from a Persian word signifies the sun, was a statesman, conqueror, and prince of great renown. He was supposed to be the son of Cambyzes, king of Persia, but his chief bio-

graphers, Xenophon and Herodotus, present his life and career in somewhat different aspects. From the Bible we learn that he subdued Babylon; ordered a return of the Jews who had been captives seventy long years, and furnished them in a liberal way with the means of re-building their Temple. Though a heathen and a bloody warrior, the Almighty made communications to him, and used him as His instrument to deliver the Jews and rebuild the Temple.*

The text suggests to us a *resemblance between the pro-*

* For Biblical references to him see Isa. xiii. 14; xxi. xlv. 25; xlv.; xlv.; Jer. xxv. 12; li. liv.; Dan. vii.; viii.

clamation of Cyrus and that of a Gospel preacher.

I. The proclamation of both is **MERCIFUL**. The proclamation of Cyrus meant *restoration*. (1) Restoration of lost liberty, and (2) Of lost religious privileges. His commission was to bring the Jews from their captivity into the possession of their own land, and to rebuild the glorious Temple in which their fathers had worshipped, and which their conquerors had destroyed. The Gospel preacher does a work similar to this, only of a higher kind. Restoration is his theme; he has to preach deliverance to the captives, and set men to rebuild the temple of the soul that has fallen into ruins by reason of sin.

II. The proclamation of both is **DIVINE**. The God of heaven gave Cyrus this commission,—it did not spring out of his own policy or philanthropy; it had its origin in God. “The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus.” The true Gospel minister is a messenger of heaven. He has not to proclaim his own theories, but the word of God. Here is his commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel.” No man is a true Gospel preacher whose spirit has not been “stirred up” by the Lord, and who does not feel that necessity has been laid upon him.

How does God stir up a man to preach now?

First: By a powerful revelation to his soul of the miserable moral condition of humanity. He is made to see all men in bondage and in ruin.

Secondly: By firing him with the spirit of Christly philanthropy. The love of Christ is made to constrain him, etc.

III. The proclamation of both is **UNIVERSAL**. The proclamation of Cyrus was to every Jew. Not *one* excluded. The old, the young, the rich, the poor, the learned, and the rude—all. It is so with the Gospel minister: his message is to all. “Go into all the world.” His message is not for a tribe, a sect, a nation, a race, but for all men—men in all countries, all conditions. He calls upon every man to repent, to believe; he invites every man to liberty and peace.

IV. The proclamation of both is **PRACTICABLE**. Cyrus laid down no terms difficult to fulfil.

First: The power to return every Jew possessed. All necessary helps were promised. “Whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering.”

Secondly: Cyrus furnished them liberally with the means

to rebuild their own Temple (ver. 7-11). It is so with the proclamation of the Gospel minister: every man can obey it. Every man can think, believe, repent, love. All are invited to the blessings of restoration "without money and without price."

V. The proclamation of both is EXTENSIVELY DISOBEYED. There were many who rather despised than welcomed the proclamation of Cyrus. (See chap. ix.) So it is with the Gospel minister, and so it ever has been. Out of the millions to whom the proclamation has been made, the number to welcome it has been lamentably few: they prefer their bondage, and remain in their ruined condition.

Subject: THE RELIGIOUS CAPABILITY OF MAN.

"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you."—1 SAM. xii. 24.

These words are part of one of the grandest addresses delivered by one of the grandest men of ancient times—Samuel. In the seventh verse he says to his audience, "Stand still, that I may reason with you before the Lord of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which He did to you and to your fathers."

I select this verse in order to illustrate the religious capability of man. Man has many capabilities, physical, mental, social; powers that have to do with the material, the intellectual, and the social. But his distinguishing power is that which has to do with God, "of whom are all things and to whom are all things." And from the verse we infer,—

I. That man can REVERENCE God. "Only fear the Lord." The word "fear" here must not be taken in its servile sense, but in its sense of loving reverence. Reverence implies,—

First: A sense of Divine greatness. For none can reverence the contemptible or the small.

Secondly: A sense of Divine excellence. For none can reverence the morally unworthy. Of all the creatures on this globe, man only has this inward sense—a sense thus infinitely higher than a mere sense of the material beauty and grandeur of the world; it is a sense that takes the soul through all phenomena into the presence-chamber of the Infinite. We infer,—

II. That man can SERVE God. "Serve Him in truth with all your heart." There is a sense in which all things serve God. (1) Some serve Him *without* their will. All the masses of matter, organ-

ized and inorganized, serve Him. (2) Some serve Him *with* their will. All rational existences do this, and moving thus they serve Him. (3) Some serve Him *against* their will. All fiends human and angelic do this. He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him. But the service which man here is inculcated to render is *by* the will. "In truth with all your heart," that is, sincerely and cordially, which mean voluntarily in the highest sense. Man can serve God voluntarily. What other existence on this earth can do this? Man can serve Him in this way or that way: he may serve Him in every capacity—as a tradesman, merchant, politician, artist, author, scientist, or as a minister of the Gospel.

We infer,—

III. That man can CONSIDER God. "Consider how great things He hath done for you." Man can reflect on God, both on what He is in Himself and on what He does. By thought he can bring down the Infinite from the heavens and place Him close to the heart. He can set the Lord before him. What other creatures on this earth can do this? The eagle that pierces the clouds with a power of vision keener, and a range wider than ours, returns from its lofty flight to its lonely eyrie without one thought of God,

CONCLUSION: How great is man! Lord, what is man!

Subject: GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN.

"The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."—JEREMIAH xxxi. 3.

The subject of these words, is *God's love for Man*. "I have loved thee." God is a personality. "*I*." He is not an impersonal power or substance, but an individuality distinct from the universe, as the architect from his building, the author from his book, the lyrist from his lyre. "Have loved," God is not mere *intellectuality*. He has sensibility, emotion, heart: He loves. What a blessed thought that love reigns in the Maker and Master of the universe.

We learn from the passage, I. That His love for man is PERSONAL. "I have loved *thee*." God's love is not a mere general feeling of loving sympathy for His creatures, a mere good-will to all. But it is directed to individuals. "I have loved thee"—man. That God loves the individual man, may be seen first from the *distinguishing constitution He has given him*. He has endowed him with more faculties of enjoyment than any other creature in the universe

possesses. He has not only the five senses to drink in all the pleasures that come from material nature; but He has given him *intellect*, by which he can enjoy the pleasures of meditation; *social affection*, by which he can enjoy the blessings of friendship; *religious affinities*, by which he can have sympathy with the source of all life and blessedness. That God loves the individual may be seen,

Secondly: By his *wonderful mercy in the mediation of His Son*. "God so loved the world," etc. Yes; but He loved the world, not in the bulk, but the individual. Because He loved each human soul, and thus He loves all. The interest He felt in the one incited, extended, and intensified His interest in the race. Christ came to find out the one lost sheep as well as the many—came as the expression, medium, and messenger of Divine love for the unit, and therefore for the whole. Christ, in His mediation, did not deal with the mass through the individual, but with the individual through the mass. In truth, souls cannot be massed together. Each has a separate world of immeasurable power and interest in itself. The one soul was to Him of unspeakable worth. His first disciples He called separately and by name. The apostles followed His example in this respect. They ad-

dressed men individually. Besides all this, each Christian man has ever felt that God's love was personal, that the Infinite Father loved him. Paul says, He "loved me and gave Himself for me."

Now this fact seems to illustrate (1) *The character of God*. See his *omniscience*. With Him the atom is not lost in the universe, the minute is not overlooked in the vast, nor one soul amidst the unnumbered hierarchies of spirits. Each soul stands out distinct to His eye. See His *condescension*. How wonderful that He should even notice one man! "When I consider the heavens the work of Thy hands." See His *fatherhood*. Does the human father love his children in the bulk? No, each is of inexpressible interest to him, and for each he labours. Thus with the Infinite Father: He says in relation to each, "I have loved thee"—thee Abraham, thee Moses, thee Job, thee Daniel, thee Paul, thee John, etc. "I have loved thee." This fact serves to illustrate (2) *The obligation of man*. The Creator has loved thee, O man! Remember this, and do not treat thyself as nothing in the universe. Remember this, and repent of all indifference towards thine Almighty Maker and Infinite Friend. Remember this, and let thy heart be fired with a supreme affection for Him.

We learn from the passage,
 II. That His love for man is ETERNAL. "Everlasting love." It is a beginningless love; there was never a period when it did not exist. It is "everlasting" and therefore,—

First: *Humanity* had nothing to do with *exciting* it. Before there were human sins or sorrows, virtues or vices, prayers or praises, it existed. Unnumbered ages before man existed, this love was a deep unfathomable ocean. Men were as real to God before their creation as they were afterwards, or ever will be. Each individual of the millions that will ultimately complete the mighty sum of the human race, was as great a reality to Him before the foundations of the world were laid as they will ever be. He saw the end from the beginning.

"To Thee, great God, there's nothing old appears,
 To Thee there's nothing new."

Secondly: *Christ* had nothing to do with *procuring* it. There is a miserable theology, old and still extant, that represents Christ as appeasing the wrath and evoking the love of the Infinite towards man. Impious absurdity, horrid blasphemy, this! Christ's mediation was the *effect*, not the *cause* of God's love for man. His mediation was no *after-thought*. The

Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. As all the oaks in all the forests that ever have been or ever will be are but the development of the first acorn, all the mediatorial triumphs of Christ are but the outgrowths of God's eternal purpose of love for mankind.

We learn from the passage,
 III. That His love for man is ATTRACTING. "Therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

First: How attracting it is in its *nature*! Kindness is always attractive; and its attracting power is always in proportion to its *spontaneity*, *disinterestedness*, and *magnanimity*. God's kindness is infinite in these respects, and therefore is as powerful as moral power can be.

Secondly: How attracting it is in its *manifestation*! Look at it (1) In nature. The world overflows with Divine kindness. It shines in the heavens, it blooms in the fields and in the meadows, it murmurs in the brooks, it booms in the ocean, it shows itself in all forms, and it speaks in all voices. What human soul has not at times felt the attractive power of God's goodness as it appears in nature in her various moods and seasons? Look at it (2) In revelation. Look at the grand *subject* of the revelation, Christ. There is love here in the "wonderful," and wonder

always attracts. Look at the *form* of the revelation. It comes in the most attractive truths for the intellect, the most transporting *poetry* for the imagination, the most mighty *suasives* for the heart.

Subject: SOUL-PONDERING
ON DIVINE SUBJECTS.

"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."—LUKE ii. 19.

The narrative in which these words are found is of transcendent and imperishable interest. Wonderful things had entered the soul of Mary, and she pondered them. We offer a remark or two on the necessity of pondering Divine subjects.

I. These ponderings are necessary in order to UNDERSTAND THE FULL MEANING of truth. Objective truth comes to us not in its pure essence. It comes to us as a germ in a shell, which we can break only by some ponderings. It comes to us as a stream, generally more or less impure; it is

only by pondering that we can filter the waters. In fact the spirit of truth can only be received by devout and earnest meditation. This winnows away the chaff, this filters the stream.

II. These ponderings are necessary in order to APPROPRIATE THE VIRTUES of truth. Truth is the nourishment of the soul; it is bread and water. But, like food for the body, its nutriment is extracted by digestion. Independent meditation is the digestive faculty of the soul: this turns the food into blood, fibre, and muscle.

III. These ponderings are necessary in order to DEVELOP THE POWER of truth. The power of truth is not in words or occasional actions, but in the whole life.—When truth is taken up into the soul by meditation, it becomes part and parcel of itself. The word is made flesh, and then as a power it is (1) *natural*, not artificial, (2) *constant*, not occasional, and (3) *influential*, not weak.

A DISCURSIVE YET EXTRAORDINARY PREACHER.—He stepped into his balloon and was up and away. The text seemed to suggest something, and that something else, and so he was upon a sea of fancies, a sea of glass mingled with fire—crystal thoughts and burning passions; the audience responding in tears and laughter; hits at current follies, blows at orthodoxy and heterodoxy, the passionate entreaty, magnificent description; every sail spread, every inch of steam on, he ploughs through the sea, dashing the spray over you, and comes at last careering into port, gently and sweetly as a June sunset.—*Haven.*

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSEA, JOEL and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem, we may with some confidence infer that he flourished after the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year B. C. 558, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible; one chapter comprehends all. Its *subject* is the destruction of Edom, on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its *style* is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

NO. CXI.

Subject: SOCIAL CRUELTY. (1)
A SIN AGAINST THE CREATOR.

“For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on

their substance in the day of their calamity; Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape: neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.”
—OBADIAH i. 10-16.

Social cruelty is the grand subject of these verses, and the cruelty is that which one brother perpetrates on another, Esau on Jacob. “Wrong or violence is all the more reprehensible when it is committed against a brother. The fraternal

relation in which Edom stood towards Judah is still more sharply defined by the name Jacob, since Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. The consciousness that the Israelites were their brethren, ought to have impelled the Edomites to render helpful support to the oppressed Judeans. Instead of this, they not only revelled with scornful and malignant pleasure in the misfortune of the brother nation, but endeavoured to increase it still further by rendering active support to the enemy. The hostile behaviour of Edom arose from envy at the election of Israel, like the hatred of Esau toward Jacob (Gen. xxvii. 41), which was transmitted to his descendants and came out openly, in the time of Moses in the unbrotherly refusal to allow the Israelites to pass in a peaceable manner through their land" (Num. xx.).—*Delitzsch.*

These verses present to us social cruelty in four different features, — as a *sin against the Creator*, — *perpetrated against a brother*, *specially offensive to God* — as *working in various forms from generation to generation.*

We shall devote a brief homiletical sketch to each of these.

The passage implies that social cruelty is a sin against the Creator; and the truth of this will appear from four subjects of thought.

I. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HUMAN SOUL. Social cruelty is against the normal condition of the human spirit. He who will study his own spiritual constitution will not fail to observe three great facts in relation to this subject.

First: *The existence of social*

love. Social sympathy is one of the primary elements of our nature: its instinct is to render service to others and to seek their goodwill and fellowship. The malign is not inherent in man. Cruelty in him is not innate, as in the tiger and the bear. We are made to love and to be loved.

Secondly: *The instinctive condemnation of cruel acts.* Never in the history of a soul has it instinctively approved of acts of cruelty as perpetrated either by itself or others. Conscience thunders against all such deeds: on the benevolent, and on the benevolent only, it smiles.

Thirdly: *Innate craving for social approbation.* The soul not only deprecates the ill-will and loathing of society, but yearns deeply and always for its approbation. But this can only be obtained by benevolent deeds. Now, inasmuch as the constitution of the soul is an expression of the Divine Will, and that constitution is against cruelty, cruelty is an outrage on the divine order.

Again, that social cruelty is a sin against the Creator will appear if we consider,—

II. THE COMMON RELATION OF ALL TO GOD. He is the Father of all men. No one of the human race is nearer to Him than another. Each is His offspring and bears His image. And between all there is therefore the relationship of brotherhood. It cannot be the will of the Great Father that His children should act as wild beasts, inflicting cruelty on each other, and thus din His benevolent ears with the groans and shrieks of His offspring. What human

father does not deprecate one of his children inflicting an injury on another, and does not ardently desire that each should work for the other? Are we more loving than He who made us? Does the brooklet contain more than the ocean?

That social cruelty is a sin against the Creator will appear if we consider,—

III. THE COMMON INTEREST OF CHRIST IN THE RACE. Christ took on Him the nature of man. He was the Son of man, not the Son of Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, bond or free, but the Son of man. The nature of all men was in Him. He wore the nature of every man, He propounded doctrines for every man, He enacted laws for every man, He tasted death for every man. He was not ashamed to call us brethren. He loved the world and gave Himself for it. How abhorrent then must it be to Him and to His blessed Father for one man to inflict cruelty upon another.

That social cruelty is a sin against the Creator will appear if we consider further,—

IV. THE UNIVERSAL TEACHING OF THE BIBLE. The whole Decalogue, as reduced and enforced by Christ, consists in loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves. And everywhere in the New Testament are we exhorted to be kindly affectioned one to another, to recompense to no man evil for evil.

* CONCLUSION. How obvious it is, then, that social cruelty in all its forms is a sin against the Creator. The man who injures his fellow-creature is a rebel against the government of the universe.

No. CXII.

Subject: SOCIAL CRUELTY.

(2) PERPETRATED AGAINST A BROTHER, SPECIALLY OFFENSIVE TO GOD.

“For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.”—OBAD. i. 10, 11.

The cruelty here is not the cruelty merely of one man against another, but of one who is in close natural relationship to the other, children of the same parents. Strange as it may be, it is nevertheless a fact that a brother's enmity is often the most savage and unrelenting. How can this fact be accounted for? From the greater amount of his natural love. True, the greater amount of love a man has in him, the greater capacity he has for wrath. Wrath is but love in flames. The measure of a creature's love determines his power of anger. The little shallow lake cannot yield that amount of boiling steam which the ocean can produce. No love, no hatred; small love, small hatred; large love, large hatred. A brother is supposed naturally to have more love in him towards his brother than any other. Hence, when this love is kindled into wrath, it is often terribly furious.

But the truth contained in the text is this, that a brother's cruelty is specially offensive to Jehovah. It is for “thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and

thou shalt be cut off for ever." But why should it bespecially offensive?

I. Because the OBLIGATION TO LOVE IS STRONGER. It is the duty of all men to love one another, but more especially the duty of a brother to love his brother. Children of the same parents are specially bound by nature to be one in sympathy and in heart.

II. Because the CHIEF HUMAN INSTITUTION IS OUTRAGED. What is the chief human institution? That of a family. Schools, governments, churches, are not to be compared to the family institution. The government of the family is the model government; the school of the family is the model school; the church of the family is the model church. But when the members of this family become cruel to each other, this human institution is outraged.

III. Because the TENDEREST HUMAN LOVES ARE WOUNDED. When brother inflicts injury on brother, parental hearts bleed, and sisters are struck with an agony of grief.

CONCLUSION: We wonder not, then, that cruelty towards brothers is more offensive to God than any other cruelty. Solomon has said that a "brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." The closer the relationship, in case of dispute, the wider the breach and the more difficult the reconciliation. A really offended brother is often harder to win back to friendship than the taking of a strong city or the breaking of the bars of a castle. Take the case of Cain and Abel, Joseph and his

brethren, Absalom and Abiram. In all these cases nothing less than death was plotted and sought. Why is this? Why is a brother's anger so implacable? (1) Great love has been wounded. The more love, the greater capability of indignation. How strong the love of a real brother! (2) Great services have been ill required. What attentions a true brother shows, how numerous, delicate, and self-sacrificing! If the object of all has proved utterly unworthy of them, how intense his chagrin, how poignant his distress! (3) Great hopes are frustrated. The offended brother anticipated a brother's sympathy, counsel, friendship, through all the chequered scenes of life. These hopes are shattered and the wreck is vexatious beyond measure. (4) Great reluctance on the offender's side to acknowledge the fault and seek reconciliation. Strange as it may seem, it is yet true; a man would sooner offer an apology to any one than to his relations, especially to brothers.

No. CXIII.

Subject: SOCIAL CRUELTY. (3)
AS WORKING IN VARIOUS
FORMS FROM GENERATION TO
GENERATION.

"But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea,

thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress. For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been."—OBAD. i. 12-16.

Here we have a sketch of the workings of this cruelty towards Judah when it was in great distress, suffering, and peril.

I. CRUELTY HAS VARIOUS FORMS OF WORKING. Look at the forms here.

First: The *lack of sympathy* when Judah was in distress. "Thou shouldest not have looked," etc. Greatly did Judah need their sympathy at this time. "Strangers carried away captive their forces;" Babylon entered their country and their city and carried them away as captives. Foreigners entered into his gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem. The city, after a long siege, was broken up; and the great officers of the king of Babylon came and sat at the gates and cast lots on the spoils of Jerusalem. It was indeed a "day of calamity," as it is three times expressed in the verses. Terrible and never to be forgotten was that day when Babylon came with all its forces into Judea, entered

the city, and bore away as captives the inhabitants.

Now, in their distress how did Edom their brother act? They stood and looked carelessly on. Want of sympathy with suffering is a sin in the sight of God. Heaven denounces men not only for the evil they actually perpetrate, but for the neglect of the good they ought to accomplish. These Edomites were like the priests with the Levite.

Secondly: *Positive rejoicing* when Judah was in distress. It is said "they rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of destruction," they "spoke proudly in the day of distress." They seem to have gloated over their afflictions.

Thirdly: *Participation in the work of their enemies.* They laid their hands on their substance, they cut off those that did escape, they delivered up those that did remain in the day of their distress.

Social cruelty ever has had and still has many forms of working. Cold indifference, malignant rejoicing, as well as positive inflictions. See the charge brought against the Edomites on this occasion.—Ps. cxxxii. 7; Ezek. xx. 12.

II. OMNISCIENCE OBSERVES IT IN ALL ITS FORMS. God's eye was on the Edomites, noted not only their positive acts but the workings of their inner souls. Sin in all its operations is evermore under the eye of Omniscience. He knows the way each spirit takes. He searcheth all hearts and understandeth all their thoughts. The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord and He pondereth their doings, they are in every place behold-

ing the evil and the good." This fact, for an incontrovertible fact it is, should be practically realized. And if practically realized it will have a four-fold effect on the soul. (1) It will stimulate to great spiritual activity. When the eye of an intelligence falls right on us the glance stirs the soul. What soul could sleep if he felt the eye of God ever resting on it? (2) It will restrain from the commission of sin. Did we feel His eye ever on us, should we yield to temptation? "Thou God^s seest me" is a powerful preventive. (3) It will excite the desire for pardon. God has seen all the errors and sins of the past, and they are great in number and enormity. Since He sees them, they must either be punished or absolved. (4) It will brace the soul in the performance of duty. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible. He knows our trials and our difficulties. Therefore let us be magnanimous under trial and brave in danger. Of God all seeing "What can 'scape the eye, deceive His heart Omniscient?"

III. A JUST AND TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION AWAITS IT IN ALL ITS FORMS. "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head," etc., etc. Retribution is a settled law in the material universe. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." There is a rebound in every sin. No crime has ever been committed that does not come back with a terrible rebound on the soul of the author. "They shall drink

and they shall swallow down." To swallow up and to be swallowed up, is the world's destiny.

NO. CXIV.

Subject: AN OLD SIN.

"For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother in the day that he became a stranger; neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress. Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity; yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity, nor have laid hands on their substance in the day of their calamity; neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossway, to cut off those of his that did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of distress."—OBAD. i. 10-14.

These words present to us an old sin in one or two aspects.

I. Here is an old sin WORKING in the history of posterity. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob," etc. What was the sin? "And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand: then will I slay my brother Jacob" (Gen.

xxvii. 41). Envy was the sin ; and this envy towards Jacob or Israel was transmitted from generation to generation. The spirit of envy that was kindled in the heart of Esau towards his brother Jacob glowed and flamed with more or less intensity for ages in the soul of Edom towards the descendants of Jacob. It was shown in the unbrotherly refusal of the request of Moses to allow the children of Israel to pass through the land (see Numb. xx. 14-21). Edom continued to be the inveterate foe of Israel. Neither a man's sinful passion nor deed stops with himself. Like a spring from the mountain it runs down posterity, often gathering volume as it proceeds. No sinner liveth to himself. One man's sins may vibrate in the soul of another a thousand ages on. This is shown in almost every chapter of the history of nations. The vengeance which the cruelty of one nation kindles in its victim will not go out at the conquest. It will burn on until it breaks out in fury, and wreaks vengeance upon its own conqueror. Hence he that taketh the sword always perishes by the sword. This fact should—

First : *Impress us with the awfulness of our existence.* It is true that in one sense we are little beings, occupying but a small space in the universe, and soon pass away and are forgotten ; still there goes forth from us an influence that shall never end. We throw seed into the mind of the world that will germinate, grow, and multiply indefinitely, and yield harvests of misery or joy. This fact should

Secondly : *Impress us with*

the duty of every lover of the universe to protest against sin in individuals. A man may say, What does it matter to you that I sin? My reply is, It does matter to me as a benevolent citizen of the universe. If your sin merely damned yourself, it is sad enough ; but it does not end there ; its pernicious influence on the universe is inconceivably great and calamitous.

II. Here is an old sin REPROBATED BY GOD in the history of posterity. God's eye traced it from Esau down. How does He treat it? He reprobates it. "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them. But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother," etc., etc. Delitzsch renders the words, "Look not at the day of thy brother," and regards verses 12 to 14 as a prohibition ; but we see not the authority for that. These Edomites, it would seem from the words, did stand on the other side without rendering help in the day when the stranger entered Jerusalem ; they did "rejoice" over the children of Judah at that period ; they did "speak proudly" in the day of distress ; they did "enter into the gate" of God's people in the "day of calamity ;" they did lay "hands on their substance" on that day ; they did stand on the "crossway" and "cut" those off "that did escape." The Omniscient

eye saw all this. The Jews appeal to Him for an account of the cruelty of these Edomites. "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof" (Ps. cxxxvii. 7). For all this God says shame should come on them, and shame did come. They are blotted from the history of the living. God condemns sin wherever it is, however it comes, and whatever its pedigree.

It may be asked, if it were the envy of Esau that thus came down from age to age in his posterity, and worked these deeds of crime, where is the justice of God in reprobating them? They only inherit the

iniquities of their fathers. We answer—(1) Sin is essentially abhorrent to Jehovah. It is the "abominable thing" which He hates. (2) The very essence of sin is its freeness. Sin is not a forced act; no deed performed by a man against his will has any moral character, or can in a moral sense be either good or bad. The posterity of Esau were not compelled to cherish and develop the envy of their great progenitor. Each one could have quenched it. Each, no doubt, felt it to be contrary to his moral nature, and that it ought to be expelled. The Almighty knew that each man was free, hence His reprobation of sin wherever found.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: Dr. Davidson's Criticism on Dean Alford's Greek Testament.

WHAT the text translated by Dean Alford does not possess great value, is clear to all who are familiar with the criticism of the New Testament. Besides being liable to the objections which a diplomatic text incurs, it bears evidence of haste, ignorance, and incorrectness. The author was generally inclined to the oldest readings. So far he followed a right direction. But he did not give sufficient attention to the considerations that modify the element of antiquity—to internal and other evidences that correct or limit it. This excessive attachment to readings best attested perhaps by external evidence, has given rise to unintelligible renderings, as in Heb. iv. 2, where the text adopted yields no proper sense.

He has produced out of it the words, "But the word of hearing did not profit them, unmingled as they were in faith with those that heard it."

For the benefit of English readers, notices of different readings are subjoined, but on no clear principle. The statements are arbitrary, because important variations are unnoticed while trifling ones are given. The author has adduced varieties of the text pretty much at haphazard. The chief variations should have been stated, or none at all. Any intermediate plan is all but useless, as far as the instructing of ordinary readers is concerned. Thus, in Mark i. 1, the words "the Son of God" are omitted on sufficient authority by Von Tischendorf. Alford, however, has no notice of the true reading. In John ix. 35, "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" Von Tischendorf's text is, "Dost thou believe in the Son of man?" but the latter is unnoticed. Luke xxiv. 40 is omitted by Tischendorf, yet Alford gives it without note or comment. In Mark viii. 26 the words, "Nor tell it to any in the village" are properly omitted by Tischendorf; but Alford inserts them without remark. In John xxi. 23, the last words of the verse, "What is that to thee?" omitted by Tischendorf, are unnoticed. In Luke xxiv. 51, 52, the words, "and carried up into heaven, and they worshipped Him," which are more than suspicious, are inserted without remark. The same is true of Acts x. 6, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do," omitted by Tischendorf; of Col. i. 2, "And the Lord Jesus Christ," of 2 Tim. iv. 22, "Jesus Christ," which also should be omitted; of Heb. x. 30, where "says the Lord" is left out by Tischendorf; of 1 Peter i. 22, "through the Spirit," which is spurious though unnoticed; of Acts xvi. 13, where there is a different reading from that rendered by Alford; of Acts xiii. 20, 21, where an important reading adopted by Tischendorf runs, "gave their land as an inheritance about 450 years. And after these things He gave Judges until Samuel the prophet;" of Acts xx. 4, "as far as Asia," which Von Tischendorf's text leaves out; of Acts xx. 15, "and tarried at Trogyllium," which should be omitted; of

Acts xxi. 8, "we that were of Paul's company;" of Luke xxiii. 23, "and of the chief priests;" of Luke viii. 45, "and sayest Thou, Who touched me?" of John x. 29, where another reading is, "That which the Father has given me is greater than all."

These are but a few cases in which readings well attested and usually received by Von Tischendorf, are ignored by the Dean in his notes. His silence would not be censurable in regard to them, did he not in many cases note such as are of much inferior importance or trifling, as "*And*" in Gal. iii. 29; Col. iii. 17; Rev. ix. 11, xii. 12-17; "*Amen*" in 1 Tim. vi. 21; "Christ Jesus," instead of "the Lord Jesus Christ," in Titus i. 4. In view of such treatment it is impossible to consider it other than arbitrary. It may be questioned if these critical notes about MSS. and versions can be useful to the general reader. They are very brief, and will often suggest no intelligible idea to the mind of those who are not scholars. The Vatican, the Alexandrine, the Sinaitic, the later Vatican, the Parisian, the Clermont MSS. need not be paraded before common readers. Nor are such remarks as—"The testimony of the ancient MSS. is divided;" "These words are not found in several of the most ancient MSS., but are contained in others;" "The ancient authorities are divided;" "Several of the oldest MSS. read" so and so—of any practical benefit to the persons for whom his revision was intended. Besides, the notes cannot be relied on implicitly, because they are not always correct. The author has been hasty, or imperfectly acquainted with the evidences on which readings rest. Thus, in Eph. v. 22, the short reading,—“Ye wives, unto your own husbands as unto the Lord,” is said to be supported by “the oldest MSS.,” whereas of the three oldest, only the Vatican reads so; the other two, the Sinaitic and Alexandrine, do not. In Eph. v. 28, the word "*also*" is said to be the reading of the oldest MSS., whereas it is not of the Sinaitic. In Rev. iv. 11, the Sinaitic reading is erroneously given. It is not, "O Lord who art our Lord and end;" but, "O Lord who art our Lord and God." In Rev. xviii. 3, "the wine of," is *not* omitted by

all the most ancient MSS.; it is in the Sinaitic and the later Vatican. The omission is sanctioned only by one old MS., the Alexandrine. A note on Matthew xvii. 21 states, "The verse is found in the other ancient MSS., versions and Fathers, except our two oldest MSS." This needs limitation; for it is in the Curetonian Syriac, a version older than any known MS. The note on Gal. v. 16, has no meaning: "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil," etc., is said to be the reading of the most ancient MSS.; but the received version is taken from the very same text as the revised one here presented, and there is no various readings among the ancient MSS. The note is meaningless or misleading.

Regarding the translation offered by the Dean, it is undoubtedly an improvement upon the received one. Where it departs from the latter, the deviations commonly express the sense more accurately. Not only is the original text represented by the translation better than the usual one; the translation itself is superior to that so long in use among English-speaking people. The Dean has done good service, and deserves commendation for it. His revised version, however, is not satisfactory. Perhaps he undertook a work for which he had not the necessary qualifications. His knowledge of Greek was not sufficiently comprehensive or exact. It seems, too, that he worked rapidly, performing tasks perfunctorily, which required more time and labour than he expended on them. In support of these remarks, it is only needful to produce a few examples of blundering.

In Matt. xxvi. 15, the incorrect rendering of the verb is retained, "*covenanted* with him," instead of "*weighed* to him." The version of Col. ii. 3, "wherein are all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge," is erroneous; for the adjective "*hidden*" is the predicate.

Hebrew vi. 1 is rendered "Therefore leaving discourse concerning the beginning of Christ," etc., which gives a meaning foreign to the original.

In Luke viii. 29, πολλοῖς χρόνοις is translated "oftentimes," a meaning obviously wrong. The phrase can only mean "for a long time."

In Acts xxiv. 14, *αἵρεσις* is wrongly rendered "heresy." The word means a "schismatical party or sect."

There is also a mistranslation and misapprehension of the original in Heb. x. 20, "by a new and living way which He inaugurated," etc. These words, following immediately "by the blood of Jesus," in the 19th verse, suggest a meaning which the writer of the epistle did not intend. The preposition "by" at the beginning of the 20th verse perverts the sense; and the true rendering, "a new and living way," etc., shows that his language characterizes the *εἰσόδον*, or "access," of the 19th verse. 1 Tim. vi. 10, "For the root of all evils is the love of money;" this should be, "The love of money is a root of all the evils."

Heb. i. 9, "therefore God, even thy God, anointed thee," etc. This should be, "therefore, O God, thy God anointed thee," etc.

Heb. x. 27, "but a certain fearful receiving of judgment." The alteration of the received version is wrong. The word here translated "receiving" means nothing but a "looking for," or "expectation."

Heb. xii. 26, 27, an adverb is rendered "once more," which means "once," and nothing else.

Acts xii. 5, "without ceasing," is erroneous. It should be "urgently," or "earnestly."

Acts xxii. 25, "And as they bound him down with the thongs." Here the verb cannot mean "bound down," but "stretched out;" and the true rendering is, "they stretched him out for the cords," or lash.

In Acts xxiv. 3, "always" is a meaning which the adverb *πάντη* does not bear. It signifies "in every way."

In Acts xiii. 48, "as many as were disposed to eternal life believed," is not the right sense; for the verb can only mean, "as many as had been appointed or ordained to eternal life." The Divine purpose lies in it.

In 1 Cor. viii. 8, "meat shall not be reckoned to us before God," is in every respect an erroneous rendering. It should be "meat will not present us before God," or "will not represent us to God."

It would be easy to multiply examples of incorrect tenses, as in John vi. 44, "I raise him up," where the present should be a future ; Luke xxi. 8, "the time draweth near," where it should be, "the time is at hand" ; 2 Cor. iv. 4, "hath blinded," for "blinded," 2 Cor. xiii. 10, "the Lord hath given me," for "gave me" ; Gal. iii. 1, "who hath bewitched you" for "bewitched you" ; 1 Cor. xvi. 15, "have set themselves" for "set themselves." In Rom. xi. 34, 35, three tenses are wrongly rendered.

Nor has the use of the article been properly attended to, as is evident from Matt. x. 24, where *the* disciples and *the* servant should not be. In like manner in Gal. iv. 5, "*the* law" should be "law" ; "*the* resurrection" in Acts xvii. 32, "*a* resurrection" ; "*the* Church" in 1 Cor. xiv 4, "*a* Church."

The omission of representatives of Greek words in the translation also mars its accuracy, as appears from John xvii. 25, "O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not." Here the conjunction is neglected, "O righteous Father, *and* the world knew Thee not." The insertion of words having no representatives in Greek is equally prejudicial, as in Matt. xxvi. 26, "blessed *it*," which gives a wrong meaning.

While the author has contributed to uniformity of rendering, often translating the same word or phrase into the same English wherever it occurs, he has not carried out the principle far enough. Thus, in Rev. ii. 14, 15, the same Greek word is "teaching" in one verse and "doctrine" in the next. And the same verb, in 1 Cor. xv. 1 and Gal. i. 2, is "*make known*" and "*certify*," without reason. Again, in Rom. ii. 18. and Phil. i. 10, the same words are differently rendered ; "*approvest* the things" in the one place, and "*discern* the things" in the other. Why also should the same verb in the same verse be differently translated, "*release*" and "*let go*," in John xix. 12 ? Conversely, it is wrong to render two different words in the same manner unless there be a necessity, which does not always exist, as in James i. 15, "*bringeth forth*" ; in Rev. xvii. 17, where "*fulfil*" stands for different Greek words in the same verse.

The Dean's work, notwithstanding its many defects, has been useful in showing the need of a fresh revision of the English New Testament. Whatever may be thought of his capacity or knowledge in matters of textual criticism and Greek translation, his services deserve recognition. It is also creditable to him that he tried to be impartial, without allowing theological prepossessions to override the knowledge of the scholar. In a very few cases perhaps his leanings may be detected; but it is almost impossible to be absolutely impartial. His judgment, indeed, was not of the highest order. That it lacked fineness of discernment is plain enough from the proposed version of Phil. ii. 6., where "deemed not His equality with God a thing to grasp at," introduces something like an absurdity—"He deemed not what He had a thing to grasp at"! The insertion of the little word *His* is totally unwarranted, and mars the right version of the words.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CXC.

Subject: TWOFOLD SUBJUGATION OF HUMANITY TO GOD—
PHARAOH AND PAUL.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."—ROM. xiv. 11.

"Intreat the Lord your God, that He may take away this death from me" [Pharaoh].—EXODUS x. 17.

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me [Paul] to do?"—ACTS ix. 6.

The passage from Romans is taken from Isaiah xlv. 23, and is quoted substantially, though not verbally. It predicts the universal subjugation of mankind to the Divine will. Every tongue shall confess. All shall solemnly acknowledge the supremacy of the Divine ruler.

Now, the universal subjugation does not mean universal salvation, for there is a *twofold* subjugation of humanity to the Divine

will. The one is represented by Pharaoh and the other by Paul. I. The one subjugation is by conviction of God's terrible POWER; the other, by conviction of His LOVE. An overwhelming sense of God's great power compelled Pharaoh to "bow his knee" before the Almighty. He felt that further rebellion would be his ruin; and for a moment he yielded. Paul's subjugation sprung from a conviction of God's love in Christ. The voice said to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." This brought him down, smote his rebellious will, reduced him to subjection. So it is ever; wicked men and devils are made to bow by a sense of God's force and God's power. Good men and angels bow from a sense of His love. II. The one subjugation involves moral ANGUISH, the other moral ENJOYMENT. What a state of agony was Pharaoh in when he uttered these words, "Intreat the Lord your God," etc! He was stricken with a panic, and was in the agony of alarm. But what joy came into Paul when the heavenly voice of Mercy said to him, "Rise, stand upon thy feet," etc! The one subjugation therefore involves heaven, the other, hell. (1) In the one, there is the sense of absolute slavery; in the other, a sense of freedom. (2) In the one, there is the sense of overwhelming terror; in the other, the sense of hopefulness. (3) In the one, there is the sense of Divine favour; in the other, the sense of Divine antagonism. III. The one becomes a ministry of DESTRUCTION to others; the other, a ministry of SALVATION. Pharaoh, the moment the panic abated, rushes on and brings destruction on himself and his mighty hosts. Paul begins a beneficent ministry which issues in the salvation of hundreds of contemporaries and increasing thousands of souls through subsequent ages.

CONCLUSION: In which way wilt thou be subjugated, my reader? It is not for thee to determine whether thou shalt bow thy knee or not: thy knee *must* bow, thy tongue must confess; but it is with thee to determine *how* thou wilt do it—by a sense of God's power or of His love, by coercion or by choice.

D. THOMAS.

No. CXCI.

Subject: CHRIST'S DEATH A MAN'S DESTRUCTION.

"Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died."—ROM. xiv. 15.

From the words we learn four things: I. Christ died to save ALL. Christ died for all, He tasted death for every man. "He is

the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." His death was a *fact* in the Divine government in which all are interested, a *provision* of Divine mercy, like the sun, the air, and the various elements of nature, from which all could derive the same supplies. He died *for* all, not *instead* of all. II. Though He died to save all, *SOME* will be destroyed. This is implied, "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." This proves the demonstration that Christ died for all, is not incompatible with a man's destruction. The *fact* has no practical influence on a man unless he studies it, and he may study it or not, rightly or not, the *provision* does not stream its blessings into a man, irrespective of his choice or efforts. The sun will not give its light to a man unless he open his eyes, nor will the water allay his burning thirst unless he drinks it in. "Ye will not come unto me," etc. III. The destruction of the man for whom Christ died may be effected by his BROTHER. "Destroy not him." Paul is speaking of a brother. "If thy brother," etc. One man can and often does spiritually ruin another by his suggestions, his spirit, his example. Whilst God saves man by man, the devil damns man by man. Through man the spiritually restorative and the spiritually destructive forces of the moral universe are everlastingly working. IV. The brother may effect his destruction by A TRIFLING THING. "Destroy not him with thy meat." By urging thy ceremonial observances, thou art likely to ruin him : leave him free to his own conscience. As an invisible atom can destroy animal life, a little sin can damn a soul.

No. CXCH.

Subject : REPUTATION.

"Let not then your good be evil spoken of."—ROMANS xiv. 16.

From this we learn : I. That a good man may LOSE his reputation. He may do so, not only by a *really* guilty act, —for a good man may fall into sin, and one sin may ruin his reputation,—but by a *seemingly* guilty act. He may make mistakes, commit imprudences. Slander is Argos-eyed, and is ever on the watch for imperfections of character, especially in those who profess to live the higher life. Do not judge men by their reputation. Character is one thing, reputation another. Many good men have bad reputations, and many bad men comparatively good ones. II. A good man should ANXIOUSLY GUARD his reputation.

"Let not your good be evil spoken of." A good man's reputation is one of his chief implements of social usefulness. Next to character, it is the dearest thing he has.

"Who steals my purse, steals trash ; 'tis something, nothing :
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed."—*Shakspeare*.

Take away a preacher's moral reputation, and he is powerless for good.

CONCLUSION : Avoid every appearance of evil.

No. CXCIIL.

Subject : MORAL GOODNESS.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink ; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."—ROM. xiv. 17, 18.

Three remarks are suggested concerning moral goodness, or true religion. I. It is THE REIGN OF GOD IN THE SOUL. It is spoken of as "the kingdom of God." What is the reign ? It is (1) the reign of reality, in contradistinction to that of appearance ; (2) the reign of spirit, in contradistinction to the reign of matter ; it is (3) the reign of love, in contradistinction to the reign of selfishness ; it is (4) the reign of the absolute, in contradistinction to the reign of the contingent and fleeting. II. IT IS A SPIRITUAL SERVICE RENDERED TO CHRIST. "For he that in these things serveth Christ." What things ? Not in meat and drink, not in mere ceremonies and ritualities, but in spiritual exercises. "Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." To serve Christ, is the grand end of being ; to serve Christ, is to serve in the highest sense your own interests, the good of the universe, and the will of God. III. It is the HIGHEST GLORY OF MAN. It ensures two things (1) the favour of God. "Acceptable to God." To please God, what is higher than this ? To have His smiles, to enjoy His friendship and fellowship. (2) The favour of *men*. "Approved of men." Christly goodness commands the involuntary homage of all consciences.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

LAZARUS AND HIS SISTERS.

I.

If nature's loveliest scenes the heart delight
Of him who gazeth, happy were those three
Whose dwelling was in beauteous Bethany—
Hard by the mount with olive blossoms white;
If gold its fortunate owner's life makes bright,
And most when used the clouds of poverty
On others' skies to gild,—blest would they be
Who wealth possessed, and it bestowed aright;
If love makes home the fairest earthly place,
Then were they glad above their kind, I wis,
For each loved each full well; nor only this,
They loved their Lord, the hope of Israel's race,
And He loved them, and oft, oh rapturous bliss!
Beside their hearth spake with them face to face.

II.

But suddenly across their threshold fell
A dreadful shadow; stricken Lazarus lies
Diseasèd, and the sisters' languid eyes
Mirror the grief which is unspeakable,
Albeit hope even yet their breasts doth swell.
Unto a messenger they say, "Arise!
"Haste to Bethabara, and our Lord apprise
"That Lazarus, whom He loveth, fares not well."
'Twas all they spake. Love needs no argument.
Show to the faithful friend but that his aid
Can succour, and, if not perforce delayed,
Swift he proceeds, on mercy's mission bent;
The news they sped, nor felt a whit dismayed
Lest Christ should fail to heed their words' intent.

III.

But Jesus lingered : long and anxiously
 The sisters watched; and oft as smote the ear
 The approaching tread of hurried footsteps near,
 Hope in their desolate hearts takes root, and see!
 Upon each cheek anon it doth appear
 A blushing flower, whose bright maturity
 Soon fades beneath the icy touch of fear
 As past the expectant porch the glad sounds flee.
 And now more weak waxed Lazarus, and even more,
 Until his breath scarce heaved his fragile frame:
 Yet Jesus tarried. Is His mercy o'er?
 Hath He no longer love for them, the same
 As once He had? And now their dead they bore
 Unto the tomb; nor even then He came.

IV.

See ! in their ruined home the sisters bend
 Their fevered brows, and weep their losses twain,—
 The brother whom they in the grave have lain,
 The Saviour who exists no more as friend;
 The sadder sorrow this, for though Death rend
 Twin human souls on earth, they yet again
 May meet beyond the kingdom of Death's reign;
 But Christ-forsaken spirits naught can mend.
 And so they mourned from weary day to day,
 While most this direful thought their bosoms rent,—
 That Jesus drew not near them to allay
 The grief He drew not near them to prevent;
 When lo ! the cry, "He comes;" and with Him they
 Their listless steps to their dead brother bent.

V.

He wept, but not that Lazarus was dead,
 And would englad his sisters' home no more,
 Nor greet his Lord with loving words when, sore
 Of foot from weary travel, Christ should tread
 The threshold of their hospitable door,
 To find a welcome meal, a welcome bed,

And for His further work be strengthenèd;
For He to life the dead man would restore.
And well He knew who to a listening host
Proclaimed the parable, as they thronged Him round,
Of the lost sheep, and of the silver lost,
That blessings missed are prized the more when found;
But He bemoaned, with tears, the fearful cost
Of sin, which in the tomb had Lazarus bound.

VI.

Beside that quiet tomb behold them stand !
The tearful trio and an eager crowd,
Who roll away the stone, as bid; then, in a loud
And piercing voice, Christ utters the command—
“Lazarus, come forth !” And lo ! the dead man, hand
And foot with grave-clothes bound, obeyed, and stood
Erect amid that marvelling multitude,
Who free his fettered limbs. The scene how grand !
From spirit-hosts just summoned, he who views
Amazed the mortal throng which prying press
Around; the exultant sisters, who caress
His vital form; their radiant Lord; the Jews,
Whose breasts the fiendish longing doth possess
To impart to Jesu’s foes the wondrous news.

VII.

Thenceforth no need there was for Christ to tell,
If risen Lazarus chanced hard by to be,
Of those bright mansions where, anon, should dwell
All those who loved Him, as with frequency
He spake to men of yore, while wonderingly
They caught the gracious words which from Him fell;
For Lazarus had those glories viewed, and he
Could speak their bliss, which doth all bliss excel.
Yes ! he had seen the shining courts on high
Which Jesus, by the loving Father’s grace
Impelled, forsook with joy, the human race
Fallen from God and good to upraise thereby;
So Lazarus oft of Heaven would speak, while nigh
Christ silent heard, meek triumph in His face,

VIII.

Much cause those sisters had their Saviour's care
To doubt, as lagged the tardy hours away,
And from their sorrow still He chose to stay,
Nor deigned their anguish to remove, or share;
And yet, e'en 'mid the depth of their despair,
His love burned for them with its wonted ray,
And turned, at length, their sorrow's night to day
Of gladdest lustre passing all compare.
Thus is it still with our most gracious Lord;
Though to our cry He sometimes callous seem,
Yet feels He all our pangs; and, in the extreme
Of our distress, His aid will oft afford:
Who from the imprisoning tomb pent Lazarus freed,
Hath pity and power to meet our every need.

THORNTON WELLS.

Note.—I am indebted to Dr. David Thomas, the author of "The Philosophy of Happiness" and numerous other works of profound and suggestive thought, for the argument of the 1st, 2nd, and 8th sonnets of the above series.—T. W.

PREACHER.—The accent of conviction is made up of a mixture of faith, power, and love combined, forming a characteristic which is at once simple, pious, and grand, redolent of inspiration and sanctity. It is the power, the magic of speech, the sacred fire, or what Mirabeau styles divinity in eloquence. It puts argument to silence, withdraws all attention from the preacher, and fixes it solely on what he says, or rather on what God says through him. It carries everything before it, because it comes from a heart that echoes the voice of God Himself. But take away the accent of conviction from the preacher, and divest his sermon of energetic faith, and what is left in it for his hearers? Mere sounding phrases and nothing more."—*Mullois.*

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE WINNOWER. ("WHAT is the CHAFF to the WHEAT? saith the Lord.")

The world wants a Winnower, and a Winnower it shall have. Never were the good things connected with the general life of England and its varied associations more mixed with chaff than now. Political Temporizings, Mercantile Trickeries, Priestly Assumptions, Social Sycophantries and Hollowness, Judicial Corruptions, Journalistic Venalities, Scientific Fallacies, Literary Sensualities abound on every hand, and not only enfeeble the instrumentalities that would be beneficial, but sicken all minds of true discernment and all hearts whose instincts are pure and honest. The True in all circles, neighbourhoods, parties, and Churches are sighing for some instrument that shall winnow the Literary, Social, Political and Religious Life of this country with the fan of Ethical Truth, and by the strong breezes of Analytic Research.

"THE WINNOWER" is being prepared, and will soon commence its work. Whatever books, records of public movements, speeches, or sermons are sent to the office shall be carefully sifted—the wheat preserved and the chaff borne away by the wind of a just and kindly criticism.

All employed in this work must be thoroughly qualified for their arduous task—for arduous it will be;—They will be men as disgusted with all the *shams* and *unrealities* of modern English life as Thomas Carlyle, whose deep, strong longings are for some instrument with which to "fumigate the atmosphere." The writers will be selected from every department of our national life,—Politicians to sift Parliamentary measures, Scientists to sift scientific questions, Jurists to sift judicial procedures, Economists to sift mercantile transactions, Homiletic Critics to sift pulpit discourses, and Moral Reformers to sift even the so-called "Christian world." They will be men pledged to do their work in a spirit catholic and generous, abjuring all that is cynical, narrow, and sectarian.

"THE WINNOWER," whose mission and spirit, thus broadly indicated, will be a First-class Weekly Journal that shall chronicle as well as

criticise the leading agencies and events of the week, taking care to give special attention to the character and operations of our British Churches.

The Proprietors are determined that "The Winnower" shall be a Journal that no thoughtful minister or layman of any party or communion shall be ashamed to own or reluctant to welcome as their organ. By excluding from its columns all puerile tales, sensational anecdotes, morbid sentimentalities, fawning adulations of public men, tea-meeting twaddlings, or advertisements of questionable morality, it will have ample space for the record of those events and discussion of those topics which are vital to the interests of the community.

[We insert this, not merely because the projectors request us to do so, but because of our deep sense of the necessity of such a journal and strong desire to see it in triumphant action. As we understand that the projectors are determined to start with a certainty of success, they are anxious to obtain a large number of pledged subscribers for one year. Post free, 6s. 6d. We invite communications.

SERMONS BY THE LATE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD. Edited by Mrs. BROOKFIELD. With Biographical Notice by LORD LYTTELTON. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 15, Waterloo Place.

These are no ordinary sermons. They are the productions of a man of genius of enlarged culture and brimful of humour. The following letter which he wrote when a curate at Maltby, to Lord Lyttelton, the author of his Biographical Notice, will give an insight into the humorous side of his mind. "Nothing changeth in this most lithic spot. The inventive spirit of a *Times* reporter would fall into lethargy in five minutes from the dearth and drought of notabilia. I have on the very coat you last saw me in; my hair and nails grow not; the fiddle is still unstrung. The only string it had when you saw it will not vary the monotony by cracking. The lean Calvinist is still lean and still a Calvinist. The very smoke hangs as it did over the chimneys, enchanted with sloth, refusing to modify itself into any new evolutions; the birds hop not, the fishes flop not, the kine crop not, and for me, my mind is the callous unresisting victim of a painless but fatal chronic, and my wits lie all five huddled and stifled in a leathern elephantiasis of sloth, incapable and inaccessible."

A communication which Miss Thackeray forwarded to the noble author of the Memoir is also very interesting, inasmuch as it reveals the judgment of her illustrious father, as to the character and merits of the preacher. "It is," says Miss Thackeray, "a great many years now since we saw Mr. Brookfield for the first time. He was standing in a white surplice, reading the psalms to the precipitate chant of the choristers in some old London church. It made a great impression on us at the time, for we had been used only to the French Protestant service. I can almost hear the voice through all these years. It was

very clear and mellow, and the words had a certain deliberate measure, which I think is peculiar to many of the Cambridge men of that time; cultivated, melancholy, the notes are very distinctive. One of my father's best-known essays is called the 'Curate's Walk.' It was published in *Punch*, at a time when Frank Whitestock and his friend were still comparatively young men. Perhaps people do not know that Frank Whitestock's name was William Brookfield. He was a curate then in St. James's, and living in Great Pulteney Street. My father, telling us once about this essay, said that he had never seen any one enter more kindly and excellently into such work. Mr. Brookfield seemed to understand his poor people with admirable instinct, and to know how to speak to them, to deal with their wants, and how to meet them on their own ground. Many persons do not remember the description of the journeyman shoemaker and his family in the "Curate's Walk." Their story was the old one. The man had been in work and had the fever. The clothes had been pawned, the furniture and the bedstead had been sold, and they slept on the mattress; the mattress went, and they slept on the floor; the tools went, and the end of all things seemed at hand, when the gracious apparition of the Curate with his umbrella came and cheered those stricken-down poor folks. The journeyman shoemaker must have been astonished at such a sight. He is not or was not a church-goer. He is a man of advanced opinions, believing that priests are hypocrites, and that clergymen in general drive about in coaches and four, and eat a tithe pig a day. This proud priest got Mr. Crispin a bed to lie upon and some soup to eat; and (being the treasurer of certain good folks of his parish, whose charities he administers) as soon as the man was strong enough to work, the curate lent him money wherewith to redeem his tools, and which our friend is paying back by instalments at this day. And any man who has seen these two honest men talking together would have said the shoemaker was the haughtier of the two.

"I remember myself once walking over a stubble field at Somerby with Mr. Brookfield, and hearing him talk about his parishioners there. He was ill even then, and bearing much pain and languor with courage, patience, and reserve, though I did not know it at the time. 'How can I preach to him? What is there for him to deny himself!' he said as an old man staggered past with some great load upon his head. 'He gets up at four in the morning, he works all day long in the field, through all weathers and wind; he crawls home at night, stupified with fatigue and crippled with rheumatism, to fling himself down to sleep; he never complains; he dines contentedly off dry bread and a bit of bacon perhaps on Sundays. He has had nothing better for years; he will never have anything else to expect. He is honest, patient, industrious, self-denying. It is he who preaches the sermon, not I.'"

The Memoir is a deeply interesting one. The volume contains twenty-six sermons, and they are no ordinary productions. Though in the conventional sense they are anti-evangelical, in the Gospel sense they are evangelical in the highest degree. They abound with quickening

truths and striking illustrations. Our readers will be able to judge of their character by the one that we republish in our Leading Homily this month.

THE CLERGYMAN'S MAGAZINE. Conducted by Members of the Church Homiletical Society. Vol. I. Part I. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

Our readers will bear us witness that we have always welcomed with a kind word every serial that has appeared of a homiletic character; and certainly a large number have appeared from time to time since the advent of the *Homilist*. If the *Homilist* has done nothing more, it certainly has had the power of calling up competitors, if not opponents. Many of them have had their day and passed away. Where is the *Evangelical Pulpit*, that came soon after us into the field; and whose avowed object it was, to correct our errors and to silence our voice? Long since gone. Where is the *Congregational Pulpit*, that rose up for the same purpose, and had for its contributors, what, in the cant and arrogance of a clique, were called "the leading preachers of the denomination?" It gave up the ghost, and has sunk into oblivion long ago. Where is the *Pulpit Analyst*, which stated in almost its first number that the *Homilist* had done its work, had worn itself out, and that it had come to drive it from the field and take its place? Though it had more strength than any of them, it too has gone to the grave with its predecessors: and since its demise some 30,000 fresh volumes of the *Homilist* have appeared, and nearly all have been sold. Where is the *Preacher's Lantern*, that was kindled by the expiring fires of the *Analyst*? It flickered a few months and then went out, and left the world as bright as ever. Here comes another from the same publishing house; and if this number is a fair specimen, it is impossible for it to live, unless the object of sermons is to act the part of mental chloral and make the pulpit more somnific than ever. The Editor's address is one of the most pointless things one can read. The first discourse is by a bishop and characteristically dull. It has not a single original thought, nor one ray of genius. Two short articles from the pen of Rev. Prebendary Griffith are about the only things in it worth reading. The Magazine contains several pages of extracts, nearly all of which may be found in "Dickenson's Illustrations," or "Bates' Encyclopædia of Anecdotes." If the Church Homiletical Society can produce nothing better than this, it will not do much toward improving the pulpit of the age. One thing we can say in its favour, and that is, it does not try to imitate the *Homilist*, as several have done. On the principle that men recoil instinctively from those animals that are most like themselves, we have often felt a disgust for homiletic productions that have been fashioned entirely after the model of the *Homilist*. A volume of such was sent to us the other day: the type, headings of the articles, distribution of the subjects, phraseology, were so like the *Homilist* that we looked at it as we should at a gorilla, too much like ourselves to be entertained.

THE YEAR OF SALVATION : WORDS OF LIFE FOR EVERY DAY. By J. VAN OOSTERZEE, D.D. JUNE TO DECEMBER. Translated by C. SPENCE. Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street.

The author of this excellent work is by this time well known to our readers. His productions are always enlightened, spirited, vigorous, and devout. An extract from the Preface will reveal to our readers the nature and purpose of this book. "Every portion of it, as far as possible, is complete in itself; every needless digression, nay, every superfluous sentence, having been rigidly suppressed. Why be silent on what I have no desire to conceal? Not unfrequently may be found here compressed into two pages, that which in a more extended form has been employed as a pulpit discourse. A large provision of unpublished sermons have been used by me for this purpose; and often the task of compression has cost considerable labour before it could be made to assume its present form. Perhaps the book, well employed, may not be found of inconsiderable service as a chapter of practical theology, and after my decease may be regarded as a sort of legacy of practical homilies. It will, at least, be apparent that I regard the office of a preacher with far greater seriousness, and make for myself, as such, far higher demands than in the present day is done by many. Much of what is here expressed in such a modest form has been in former years urged with vehemence, and then not easily rejected. Late, however, but times change, and we with them. Many of those to whom my words and writings were, through the grace of God, at one time of significance, have now gone hence; others who still know and comprehend me will perhaps in these sheets appreciate the evidence of personal faith and spiritual experience in which we are united, whatever else may faint and fail. A portion of myself, of the best that I can give, I have expressed in these pages; and in so far I have myself found in these meditations inward refreshing in many a weary and solitary hour. May it prepare a similar invigoration to my companions in the path and in the contest, both on this side of the ocean and on the other, in whose hearts and households those words of life have found a willing entrance, which shall ever be to me yet more and more the material for humble gladness in Him who has strengthened me for this work in the service of His Church."

We heartily recommend this book, as one of the very best of its kind that has appeared.

THE EVERLASTING SIGN ; OR, CHRISTIANITY ITS OWN WITNESS. By WILLIAM HUDSON. London : Longmans, Green & Co.

This book contains seven discourses, the subjects of which are, The Everlasting Sign, the Saviour of the Gospel, Decision, The Divine Ideal of the Church, True Christian Discipleship, Christian Worship, A Pure Life in an Impure World.

We give the Preface, as explaining the author's idea in this work.

"The second of these discourses was delivered in substance at Horn Castle in May last, in connection with an annual meeting of Christian Ministers who honoured me with an unanimous request for its publication. The rest have been delivered in the ordinary course of my public ministrations, and appear in their present form as a memorial of services in which some persons profess to have found interest and profit. But another design has also been kept in mind, as the title of the book will show; and the volume is given to the public under the conviction that it deals after its manner with a subject of great present importance. The thorough investigation of this subject is most desirable, and this little book may be a slight contribution towards that end. The Christian life is among us, appealing to every one who observes and thinks. What is its origin, and what great lesson is its presence designed to teach? This two-fold question the following pages are meant to answer in some fair degree. How the argument has been conducted, and what amount of value is to be attributed to it, as here presented, I leave the reader to consider and determine for himself."

There is much in these discourses stimulating at once to the thinking and the devotional elements of human nature. Many passages will be found marked by vigour and eloquence.

THE PASTORAL CARE. BY SAMUEL MAC ALL. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

The intention of the author of this work is undoubtedly good, and many of his remarks are characterized by practical wisdom. But, ah me! the young preachers who require such minute directions as to how they should act in their various departments of duty, must be so destitute of true genius and pastoral aptitudes that they should give themselves to manual and mechanical work rather than to the work of inspiring souls to the right and the true. They must be dolts indeed, to require much of the advice contained in this little volume.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE TEN DAYS' CONVENTION FOR THE PROMOTION OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS HELD AT BRIGHTON. London: F. E. Longley, 39, Warwick Lane.

We have no doubt that all the people who enter into this revival kind of work are well-meaning and heartily desire to be good and do good. But we are bound to confess that the amount of egotism which almost every speaker displays, the theological crudities that he utters, and the sensation which he seeks to produce, are opposed alike to our moral tastes and to our convictions as to the sublime ideas and lofty purposes of spiritual Christianity.



A HOMILY

ON

*Lessons Suggested by our Lord's First Purification of the Temple.**

SCHLEIERMACHER X.

IF Christ had appeared as a *Teacher merely*, even this would have been a great benefit; and the truth, once scattered abroad in the hearts of men, would never have perished; but it would hardly in this way have become an affair of the whole human race and have acquired this extensive influence over it.

Where anything great is to be effected, there word and deed, teaching and labour, must meet together; and so also with Christ, the teaching is only one-half of His occupation, the other half is the establishment of a community of love and reverence towards God, of a new mind, of a holy spirit.

Therefore it was necessary that He should appear, in regard to the existing institutions of religion, and in

* John ii. 13-17.

regard to what was essential in the old still-existent constitution, as a Reformer; and it is important for us to learn from an example, upon what principles He acted in this capacity.

This was the first time, since our Saviour had publicly appeared as Teacher, that He had entered the sacred precincts of the Temple.

The Temple was the outward centre of all religious life; all pious hopes and notions clustered around it; and from it proceeded all arrangements which held the people together among themselves, and separated them from the rest of the world. Here it was necessary that the work of improvement should begin, and the foundation be laid of the new spiritual edifice which Christ had come into the world to erect.

Let us from that account learn the *principles by which our Lord was actuated in the improvement of all that had reference to the religious associations of men.*

I. In the first place we perceive, that in this case also our Lord shows that *He came not to dissolve and to destroy, but, connecting Himself with what was given, to improve and to complete.*

In accordance with the opposite self-revealing tendency, which even in our time is in many other respects well-meaning, it might be asked, Why did the Redeemer expose Himself to such trouble and danger for the improvement of an institution, the downfall of which He had Himself so truly prophesied? (John iv. 21.)

But yet we see everywhere, that He was not willing to erect the new upon the ruins of the old, but, so much as in Him lay, the former should connect itself in a mild and gentle way with the latter, in order to improve it.

This bias of genuine godlike wisdom, this equally pacific and victorious power of Christ we too are required to make our own. Never can destruction be the specific

aim, the conscious and deliberate act, of the thoroughly spiritual man, but only maintenance and reformation with a view to greater perfectness.

What is incapable of improvement will fall; but let this happen, not by the deed of violence and injustice, let it be the result of its inward inevitable destiny.

II. *The zeal of the Saviour in the purification of the Temple was directed to this end—that out of those precincts which were devoted to pious meditation, out of that quiet retreat which was set apart, in the midst of the busy world, for the fashioning of the inner life, everything should be banished which might entangle and draw men down again into the thoughts and anxieties of common life.*

Not frivolous-minded, nay, even truly just and candid persons might have thought that such-like outward things were nothing injurious, and could present no hindrance to the true directing of the mind toward God. The Temple was surely large enough; all those business people were surely ministering to the commerce of the religious life. Was it not a matter of indifference whether they were within or in the neighbourhood of the Temple? Those who allowed their devout feelings to be disturbed by them, could in any case only be such from whom it would simply never be possible to remove all occasions of disturbance, and so forth.

But human prudence is one thing, Christ's insight, which here must have shown itself the true one, another.

Whatever is designed to bring men together into the presence of the Most High, and to sustain and strengthen them in their intercourse with God, let it be kept pure, and not be desecrated.

The weakness of the human heart forbids the outward and the inward, the worldly and the Divine, to be thus indiscriminately mingled, and makes even the outward separation of the two domains to be necessary.

The germ of corruption in the Jewish nation was precisely that mixing up of the holy and earthly, the ecclesiastical and the civil; hence that readiness to be satisfied in religion and morality with the empty word and outward custom.

Because Christ saw this, He considered what He now did to be so necessary, that He repeated it later on.

Therefore let us also keep our ecclesiastical society, which the same temple-purifying Lord has instituted, free from all admixture with foreign and discordant elements.

III. Thirdly, it might be asked, *with what right the Saviour acted in this way.* Did He not overstep the limits of His authority, and meddle with the concerns of the priests and rulers?

No. It was a part of the free customs of that age and nation, that any person could attack and remove whatever ran counter to the public right. At that time honest zeal had its rights and room to work in.

Where no public action is allowed, but what is apportioned to outward offices, there that too-narrow spirit abounds which is idle and negligent in that which is good, when there is no direct demand for it in the outward calling, or in connection with which each is ever leaning upon his neighbour.

The spirit of the Redeemer, in which He was far from all slothfulness towards the good and from every cowardly sentiment, is to pass over into the mind and life of every Christian.

Zealous speech accompanied His deeds from the commencement and aroused the bystanders, so that the work of cleansing which He had begun was carried to completion. Thus also we are to lift up our voices for the right and good, that we may win public opinion for it; the scourges that terrify in the present day are fear and shame.

We Christians are the nation of priests, who are called to keep the great temple pure—the spiritual temple of the Godhead upon earth.

W. E. COLLIER.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this *TEHELIM*, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough *HOMILETIC* treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The *HISTORY* of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) *ANNOTATIONS* of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The *ARGUMENT* of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is among the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The *HOMILETICS* of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: The mere Formalist and the Spiritualist in Religion.

“But unto the wicked God saith,” etc.—PSALM l. 16–23.

HISTORY.—See page 139.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 16.—“*But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou, to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth?*” The words “statutes” and “covenant” express the same thing, viz., the law of God.

Ver. 17.—“*Seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.*” The words of Paul, Rom. ii. 21–23, are a commentary on this.

Ver. 18, 19, 20.—“*When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit. Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother’s son.*” Here is a terrible indictment, a long catalogue of charges. *Dishonesty*; “consentedst

with " thieves, sympathizing with and acquiescing in their conduct. *Adultery* : " hast been partaker with adulterers." A vice, this, common amongst the Jewish people. *Falsehood* : " Givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit." Their tongues were employed in devising and executing purposes of fraud and falsehood. *Slander* : " Thou speakest against thy brother ; thou slanderest thine own mother's son." All these crimes they had perpetrated whilst attending at the same time to the duties of a mere ceremonial religion.

Ver. 21.—"*These things hast thou done, and I kept silence.*" That is, I have held my peace ; I have not interfered to check thy freedom, or to punish thy sins. "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" This is a very common and a very grievous moral mistake—men judging God by themselves. "*But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.*" That is, I will array thy sins before thine eyes. I will so spread them out before thee that thou shalt see them distinctly and impressively.

Ver. 22.—"*Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*" " Oh, consider this, ye forgetters of God, lest I rend, and there be no deliverer."—*Alexander.*

Ver. 23.—"*Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me : and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God.*" This means the same as verses 14 and 15.

ARGUMENT.—This begins the second part of the same subject as that contained in the former verses. In those verses is shown that mere outward form cannot obtain acceptance with God, but that the religion of the heart is the one essential thing. Here it is shown that wicked men cannot be approved of by God however strict and regular in their religious observances.

HOMILETICS.—Homiletically, the verses bring under our notice two classes of religious men : the mere formalists and the true spiritualists.

I. THE MERE FORMALISTS in religion. Concerning these, several things are suggested.

First : They are *religiously active*. " What hast thou to do to declare My statutes ? " etc. Mere formalists are often very busy in preaching and praying. As a rule, perhaps, the good thing that man most lacks he will speak most about ; the man who loves least will talk most about love ; the man with the least principle will be the most active in advocating it, and the man with the least religion in spirit will talk most about it. The less heart in religion, generally the more hand ; the less vitality, the more voice. No hand was so busy at the

table of the Last Supper as that of Judas. "The hand of him who betrayeth Me is on the table."

Secondly : They are *morally wicked*. "Unto the wicked God saith." Under all their religious services there was the spirit of wickedness. (1) They had no desire for knowledge. "Thou hatest instruction." (2) They had no reverence for God's word. "Thou castest My words behind thee." There was an inward contempt for that which they taught. (2) They had no practical regard for the rights of society. They had the spirit of dishonesty, falsehood, adultery, and slander. The wickedest men that have ever lived have often been the most religious in a ritualistic and formal sense. Religious formality crucified the Son of God Himself. Religious form without the genuine spirit, is worse than clouds without water. It is law without justice—a tyranny ; language without truth—a deception ; an atmosphere without oxygen—a poison.

Thirdly : They are *God-degrading*. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." They bring the Infinite down to their own level ; they invest Him with their own passions, infirmities, and even vices. The God of the formalist is fashioned after his own character.

Fourthly : They are *Divinely threatened*. Threatened (1) With a terrible conviction of their own guilt. "I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes." What calamity can be greater, than for a sinner to have all his sins, in all their awful enormity, brought before the eye of his conscience ; instead of being separated from him as far as the east is from the west, brought into contact with all the tenderest and profoundest sensibilities of his moral being ? (2) With an irremediable destruction. "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." The language here is derived from a ravenous beast, tearing its victim limb from limb. "None to deliver." "I called, and ye refused ; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded it," etc.

II. THE TRUE SPIRITUALISTS in religion. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me ; and to him that ordereth his conversa-

tion aright will I show the salvation of God." Who is the truly spiritual man ?

First : He is one that *worships God acceptably*. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me." The sentiments of gratitude, reverence, adoration, that rise out of his regenerated heart are the praise that is well-pleasing to God. These, and not the bended knee, not the costly sacrifices, not the loud hymn, constitute religion.

Secondly : He is one that *lives an upright life*. "Him that ordereth his conversation aright." He is a man that walks in all the commandments of the Lord, blameless.

Thirdly : He is one who *secures the true salvation*. "Will I show the salvation of God." Salvation from all ignorance, error, selfishness, sin, and sorrow.

CONCLUSION.—Such are a few homiletical thoughts suggested by this psalm, the general ideas of which, says a modern author, are "(1) That there is to be a solemn judgment of mankind ; (2) That the issues of that judgment will not be determined by the observance of the external forms of religion ; (3) That God will judge men impartially for their sins, though they observe those forms of religion ; and (4) That no worship of God can be acceptable which does not spring from the heart."

LIFE A RELIGION.—"How different is the aspect, in action at least, of those grand conceptions which we term Christianity,—its vast establishments, countless teachers, and multitudinous professors,—as contrasted with the period when twelve poor men, with their great Leader, essayed to plant new standards of spiritual truth before the world. Then Christianity sought, now it claims, a hearing. Religion, however, should be acted as well as spoken. Incredible, almost, considering the immensity of the means, seems too often the paucity of results. But the Church which is to consummate religion's precious work, ruling by love, not law merely, must be unfettered by formula or creed. Yes, a mighty purpose, a united faith, shall one day address themselves to the elevation of the down-trodden, the reclamation of the vicious and incompetent, the inculcation of rectitude and truth, and the beauty of charity on all."—*Dr. M'Cormac*

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: Righteous Sarcasm.

"But Job answered and said," etc.—JOB xxvi. 1-4.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS: Ver. 1.—"*But Job answered and said.*" "In this chapter Job commences a reply to all that had been said by his three friends, and concludes the controversy. At the close of this chapter it would seem probable that he paused for Zophar, whose turn came next to speak; but as he said nothing, he resumed his discourse, and continues it to the close of chap. xxxi." "Whenever," says Dr. Bernard, "any one of Job's friends had thought it necessary to remind him of the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of God, the unfortunate man not only immediately takes up these subjects himself, but generally dwells upon them at much greater length than his friend had done, with a view, probably, to make him feel the impropriety of preaching that to him which he himself, as was well known, had been in the habit of preaching to others during the whole of his life. This custom of his we shall see him follow in the discourse he is about to deliver. Bildad had in his last speech brought forward no argument whatever, contenting himself with setting forth in a few words the unlimited power and profound wisdom of the Almighty; this is felt by Job very keenly, and is looked upon by him as a real insult. He therefore replies."

Ver. 2.—"*How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?*" The patriarch here seems to mock Bildad in having said here nothing but what was universally known. He means to say, What assistance hast thou given to him that has no strength, what help hast thou given to the arm that has no might?

Ver. 3.—“*How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom?*” “As he had undertaken to give counsel to another, and to suggest views that might be adapted to elevate his mind in his depression, and to console him in his sorrows, he had a right to expect more than he had found in his speech.” “*And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?*” Plentifully means abundantly. The meaning is, What a multitude of words thou hast employed to tell me what I know! Thou hast said nothing new, nothing to meet the difficulties of the case.

Ver. 4.—“*To whom hast thou uttered words?*” “The sense is, Do you attempt to teach me in such a manner on such a subject? Do you take it that I am ignorant of the perfections of God, that such remarks about Him would convey any real instruction?” “*And whose spirit came from thee?*” By whose spirit didst thou speak? Dost thou imagine that there is inspiration in thy words? Thy utterance is common-place, nothing more. Have not I myself proclaimed the boundless wisdom of God?

HOMILETICS.—These words suggest the subject of righteous sarcasm. All expositors of this passage discover irony strong and sharp in these words. In other places of the Divine word than this, irony is discovered; even Christ Himself seemed to deal in sarcasm. When is sarcasm *righteous*? Not when it is used *haughtily*. It often seems to be the very breath of a haughty spirit. Satire sits ever on the lip of the arrogant. Not when it is used by *revenge*. The man who uses it as a man would a pistol or a sword, to wreak vengeance on an offender, uses it unrighteously: for revenge is a bad passion. “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.” Not when it is used by *irreverence*. Irony is the favourite style of speech with the impious and the profane. They sit in the “seat of the scorner;” they sneer at the holy and the good. Not when it is used by *ill-nature*. There are some whose natures seem to be malign, and their speech is a snarl. There are journals whose inspiration is ill-nature, and whose speech is satire. When, then, is it righteous?

I. When it is used to CHASTISE THE WRONG. Thus Job used it now. Bildad and his other friends had done him a wrong in charging him with sentiments which he never held, and in speaking to him in a spirit of antagonism rather than of friendship; and he chastises them, not with a physical instrument,

but with satiric speech. Man is justified in chastising wrong, and sarcasm is one of the best instruments for the purpose. It is often the most painful. It penetrates where no bullet, spear, or sword can reach. It cuts into the soul, it lacerates the heart, it often makes conscience writhe. Because it is the most painful, it is frequently the most effective. Satire will often strike a man down where physical violence will only rouse him into bold defiance. A poet has represented a satirist as saying,—

“I’m one whose whip of steel can with a lash
Imprint the characters of shame so deep,
Even in the brazen forehead of proud sin,
That not eternity shall wear it out.”

It is righteous,—

II. When it is used as a CORRECTIVE OF ERROR. There are errors which can stand before the strongest arguments, but will reel and writhe at the breath of sarcasm. What errors in social life, such as snobbery and lacqueyism, have not been grievously wounded, and in some cases crucified, by the manly and mighty sarcasm of such men as Thackeray and Carlyle? And many Puritanic crudities, sickly sentimentalities, and narrow bigotries withered before the breath of South’s ironic discourses. It is righteous,—

III. When it is used as a SHIELD OF DEFENCE. Self-defence is often justifiable where physical force is unjustifiable; and where the most powerful arguments and appeals are ineffective, a stroke of sarcasm will do the work and make the coward crouch at your foot.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are :—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard ; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee ; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner ; Lange ; etc., etc.

Subject: Christ's Superhuman Claim.

"The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself ; Thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true : for I know whence I came, and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true : for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me. Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father ? Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father : if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also."—JOHN viii. 13-19.

EXPOSITION : Ver. 13.—"*The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself ; Thy record is not true.*" In Deut. xvii. 6, we have this Jewish law. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death ; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death." This law did not mean that what one man said was necessarily untrue because not confirmed by other men. for truth is independent of witnesses. Nor does it mean that a statement is necessarily true because a number of men will affirm it ; for in corrupt society it is not difficult to get almost any number of men, on certain conditions, to swear to a falsehood. This has been done over and over again in human history, and is being done the world over this very day. The intention of this law seemed

to be to guard human life from the stroke of a hasty vengeance. The Pharisees, however, seem to refer to this law as a reason for rejecting what Christ had asserted concerning Himself being the "light of the world." They do not say that His evidence is insufficient because it is unsupported by a second party, but that it is not true.

Ver. 14.—"*Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true.*" This seems to contradict what our Saviour said in chapter v. 31. "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true." He does not mean there, not true in itself; but, not true in your judgment, according to your law. Here he asserts broadly, that though He had no witness, yet His record was true. What He said was true, though the world itself denied it. He knew it to be true. "*I know whence I came, and whither I go: but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.*" "Light," says Augustine, "both shows itself and other things. Light affords witness to itself. It opens sound eyes and is its own evidence." Then also, only he who knows can witness, and Jesus alone knew this. He, as it were, said, I know perfectly My origin, My mission, and My plans, and no human evidence could be free from any possibility of error, or have such absolute certainty as Mine. "*But ye cannot tell.*" His origin in God and His return to God were divine actions which surpassed all human knowledge and could not be reached except through Divine revelation, which they would not receive.

Ver. 15.—"*Ye judge after the flesh.*" They judged from appearances, a most deceptive rule of judgment this, for things are not what they seem. All their notions of worth, happiness, honour, success, were carnal. "*I judge no man,*" i. e., I judge no man as you judge man. He came, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He had not even condemned the adulteress to death, but preached to her repentance, forgiveness, salvation.

Ver. 16.—"*And yet if I judge, My judgment is true.*" "*Yet if I judge,*" καὶ ἂν κρίνω ἐγὼ. The "I" is emphatic. "*For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me.*" He felt himself so personally associated, so essentially One with His Father, that His acts as well as His testimonials had the highest confirmation.

Ver. 17.—"*It is also written in your law.*" He now puts the case home to them on their own principles, that the law requires a double witness. Deut. xvii. 6, xix. 15. The emphasis is upon *your*—the law which they had made so completely their own, and in which they boasted, "*That the testimony of two men is true.*" It was in the mouth of two or three witnesses that every word should be established. This allowed of two as enough. He claims that He has two.

Ver. 18.—"*I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.*" As if He had said, According to your law, which requires a second witness, you should believe Me, for My Father is My witness.

Ver. 19.—“*Then said they unto Him, where is thy Father?*” This question was evidently put in derision, spoken in the same spirit as Pilate exclaimed, “What is truth?” You have no Father but an earthly one like ourselves, if so where is He? “*Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father : If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also.*” The same spiritual light and darkness would suffice to reveal to the mind or to hide from it at once the Father and the Son, the Sender and the Sent.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of these words is *Christ’s super-human claim*. That claim is stated in the preceding verse which we have already discussed, it is the claim of being the Light of the world. Here we have this claim,—

I. DENIED BY THE PHARISEES. “The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself : Thy record is not true.” We make two remarks upon their denial,—

First : It was, from their view of Him, somewhat *natural*. Though it must be admitted that they had plenty of evidence to convince them that He was any how superhuman, they regarded Him only as a man, and therefore such words as, “I am the Light of the world,” falling from the lips of a mere man, would strike them as an arrogant and impious falsehood. Imagine the wisest and the best man that ever lived coming to you and uttering such words, how would you feel, and what would you say ? Would you not be likely to regard him either as a brainless fanatic or as an impious impostor ? You would repudiate his utterance and recoil from his presence. These Pharisees therefore, regarding Him as they did, as a mere man, we wonder not at their statement, “Thy record is not true.” Another remark we make concerning their denial is,—

Secondly : That the reason for it was somewhat *absurd*. What was the reason ? It lacked the corroboration of another witness. “Thou bearest record of Thyself.” We cannot accept this mere self-assertion : thy single testimony on such a subject as this we cannot accept. We do not suppose for a moment that if all the disciples and a thousand more had stood by Christ and asserted the truth of His utterance, they would have accepted it. No number of men can make a

truth more true, or turn a falsehood into truth ; and hence their reason is absurd. The fact was, that their unbelief in Christ was a thing of the heart, and they were ready to formulate some reason to justify its existence. So it has ever been, and so it is now. The reasons men assign for their infidelity are not the cause of their unbelief ; the cause is deeper down in their nature, down in the region of prejudices, prepossessions, likings and dislikings. Here we have this claim,—

II. VINDICATED BY CHRIST. In His vindication He states four things,—

First: *That His assertion was true, independent of any witness.* “Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true : for I know whence I came and whither I go ; but ye cannot tell whence I come and whither I go.” That He was the “Light of the world” was not with Him an ambitious dream, or an idea that had come to Him from the testimony of others ; it was with Him an absolute fact of *personal consciousness*. “For I know whence I came.” As men know that they have minds because they think, feel, and resolve, Christ knew that He was the “Light of the world.” It was true independent of all testimony for or against. He was conscious of it. “Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true.”

For His vindication He states,—

Secondly : *That their judgment on the question was carnal, His was true.* “Ye judge after the flesh ; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true.” The judging of the Pharisees was without significance or weight, for it was by appearances ; and appearances are ever deceptive. They judged Christ by His mere bodily aspect and mien, a poor, wan, dejected man ; and therefore His declaration that He was the “Light of the world” would appear incredible to the last degree. He that judgeth by appearances, in a world like this, will generally judge wrongly. Thus Christ judged not. His eyes penetrated through all appearances and phenomena, clearly discerned and estimated those everlasting principles

that inspire the heart of the Absolute One, and that move and manage the universe. In His vindication He states,—

Thirdly : *That whilst His assertion was true, independent of any witness, it was nevertheless backed by the testimony of the Eternal Father.* “It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me.” Jesus had up to this point vindicated the validity of His own testimony. Here He asserts that His testimony was affirmed by the Highest Being—the Father. In his words here we have a conclusion *a minori ad majus* ; “If, according to your law, the testimony of two men who may be deceived is sufficient, how much more the testimony of two witnesses who are highly exalted above all suspicion of error or deception.” God’s testimony in favour of Christ’s teaching goes on through the ages, comes out in nature, in science, in human history and consciousness. In His vindication He states,—

Fourthly : *That they were in utter ignorance both of His Father and Himself.* “Their question seemed to indicate that His Father was something utopian, that His conceit of being God’s Son was an idle fantasy, without any reality. Christ intimates to them that they, by the wicked position which they assumed towards Him, closed against themselves the way to the knowledge of His Father. Whosoever places himself in opposition to Christ can never know the Christian and only true God, the Father of Jesus Christ ; for Christ is the bridge to that God whom not to know is to be without life and without salvation. In reference to the manner of the Jews’ coming, Quesnel remarks ‘All may desire and seek the knowledge of God and His mysteries in humble and sincere prayer, or with a mind full of evil design and unbelief, as we see here, and among the learned of this world.’”—*Hengstenberg.*

Germ of Thought.

Subject: The Drama of Life.

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”—EPH. v. 1.

THE word *mimētai*, which is here translated *followers*, signifies such as *personate others*. This is done by one person assuming the gait, mode of speech, accent, carriage, and the general peculiarities of another whom he desires to *represent*. It is from this Greek word that our English word *mimic* is derived. Though this term is often used in a ludicrous sense, yet here it is employed in a very solemn and *substantial* sense. The plain import of the sentence seems to be this,—“Let your whole conduct be like that of your Lord.” *Imitate* Him, in all your words, actions, spirit, and inclinations. Copy Him as children do their parents. For *that* is your relation to Him. If ye, therefore, be children of God, show this love to your heavenly Father, and *imitate* all His moral perfections. Acquire the mind that was in Jesus. His language is, “Verily, verily, I say unto you. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth,—*these also doeth the Son*.” Even *His* mediatorial life was one of sublime *imitation*. All the perfections of Deity were fully represented by Him. We learn from the figure employed in the text, that the Apostle in this place viewed the Christian life under a *dramatic aspect*. There are several thoughts suggested.

I. CHRISTIAN LIFE ON EARTH IS REPRESENTED AS A MORAL DRAMA.

By a *drama* ordinarily is meant, a poem, or literary composition, representing human life, and accommodated to *action*. The character or characters involved in it may be represented by *actors*. In its nature, the drama may be either tragedy or comedy, or some variation of these. It may be either fictitious or real. It may also be made to include every species of repre-

sentation by action that man is capable of performing. It is in this broad and comprehensive sense that we use the term *drama* here. Hence, it may be a representation of the physical or the moral, of the human or of the Divine life.

First: *The representative element enters into all human life.*

Life itself cannot be seen by us in its essential nature, we can judge of it only by its visible manifestations. We form our opinions of the essential by the phenomenal. All the outward activities of man are but *interpretations*, more or less accurate, of the inward operations of the soul. The *body*, in every look, attitude, gesture, and grimace, in a certain sense *personates the spirit*. We can take no cognizance of the sublimest realities of existence, only as they are manifested to us through appropriate *media*. We can know nothing of thought, only as it is expressed in *words*; of motive, only as it is displayed in *action*; of principle, only as it is developed in *character*. The visible is a *personation* of the invisible. Every look, every word, and every act, are in a certain sense *dramatic*. All men are actors, whether they will it or not. The representative element enters into their whole life, and makes it sublime or ridiculous, God-like or fiend-like.

Secondly: *The imitative element enters into all human life.*

Man is emphatically an imitative creature. His whole life is moulded and fashioned on this principle. There is no absolute originality in him. He cannot create something out of nothing. All that he has, he has borrowed from others. Past ages, each and all, have contributed their portion to make him what he is. He is ignorant or intelligent, selfish or generous, cruel or humane, impious or godly, according as he has treated the facilities vouchsafed to him by a benevolent Providence for his improvement. Before him are presented good and evil, both in precept and in example. It is left for him to choose between them, to decide according to which *model* he will form his character. The command in the text, Be ye therefore *imitators of God*, as dear children, implies that man has it in his power to form his character, by imitating a *different example*. It is a fact, alas ! that he is prone to copy the

moral *deformities*, rather than the moral *excellences* which are presented before his mental eye.

Thirdly : *The incidental element enters largely into human life.*

In a *drama* the scenes are frequently changed. Event follows event in rapid succession. There are startling developments at every turn. We are carried forward on an ever-increasing tide of excitement, to the terminus. So it is with life. It is replete with *incident*. Man is ever varying in his moods, in his acts, in his relations, in his circumstances and experiences. He does not continue the same for two days, nor two hours, nor two seconds. His life, in its phenomenal aspect, is like the floating cloud—at one time it is bright and luminous, at another it is dark and sombre, now charged with the elements of destruction, anon resting so soft and beautiful on the dappled sky. Thus it is too with the Christian life. There are alternate seasons of deep depression and exultant joy, of bitter disappointment and of sweet satisfaction, of turmoil, of agitation, and of calm repose. The drama is full of incident and the *scenes* are constantly changing.

II. THE CHARACTER THAT IS REPRESENTED IN THE MORAL DRAMA OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.

That character is *God Himself*, as manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ. “Be ye therefore *imitators* of God,” etc.

First : *He is a Sublime Character.*

The merit of the literary drama depends to a great extent upon the significance of the *character* that is dramatized. The hero in the play must possess some prominent and startling peculiarities, which are calculated to render him conspicuous. There must be something in him, or in his supposed history, by which he is distinguished. To conceive of such a character, and to graphically delineate him, until he assumes an intense individuality, is generally considered to be among the loftiest achievements of creative genius. But the character to be personated in the moral drama of life is God Himself, as seen in Christ ! There are attributes in God that cannot be represented by man, nor angel, nor any created intelligence,

however lofty. One alone in the universe can say with unqualified truthfulness, "He that hath seen *Me*, hath seen the *Father*." He is able to represent Him in all His infinite perfections. Though it is not in man's power to *imitate* God in *all* things, yet there are *some* things in which he, as an intelligent being, can *imitate* Him ; and man is the only being on earth that is endowed with that ability.

Secondly : *He is a Holy Character*. Holiness is an essential attribute of the Divine Nature. It is said of Him, God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. He is absolutely holy—not having the slightest shadow of imperfection. He dwelleth in light unapproachable. The holiness of God is the *summation* of all His perfections. It is the glory and splendour of His Being. There is no attribute of His Nature that removes Him so far from man as a sinner, as His holiness. Man, though he has become a sinner, still retains a certain resemblance to God ; but he bears none whatever to His *holiness*. He has lost the moral image. There is nothing that man needs, so much as holiness. Give him *that*, and all error will at once disappear from the intellect, all pollution from the affections, and all guilt from the conscience. Complete holiness is *perfect blessedness*. Though nature whispers not a syllable as to the holiness of God ; yet we have a glorious *revelation* of it given us in *Jesus Christ*. He was the embodiment of holiness. It beamed in His every look, sounded in every word He spoke, and radiated in every act He performed ! And He has given us an example, that we should follow Him. His whole life is vocal with the command to us, "*Be ye holy for I am holy.*"

Thirdly : *He is a Loving Character*. It is not said of Him that He loves merely, but that He *is* love. All love, whatever may be the human form of its manifestation,—whether paternal, filial, or fraternal,—comes from Him. As all the sap in the tree comes from the roots, all the blood in the body comes from the heart, all the water in the clouds comes from the seas, and all the light of the stars comes from the sun ; so *all the love* in heaven and earth has its origin in God. His

love is unfathomable and all-comprehensive. It blooms in all beauty, pulsates in all true life, and vibrates in all melody. But, as all the varied hues of light, as reflected in the rainbow, are blended into *one white ray* in the sun ; so likewise, all the numerous manifestations of love, as witnessed in the universe, *centralize* in Christ, “ who is the image of the invisible God ” and “ the brightness of His glory.”

III. THE ACTORS IN THIS MORAL DRAMA.

The *dramatis personæ* are believers in Christ. The Apostle regarded every Christian in the capacity of an *actor*. There are at least three things that we may fairly suppose every good actor must attend to.

First : *He must study thoroughly the character that he wishes to represent.* It is expedient that an actor should be perfectly familiar with every thought, feeling, trait, and peculiarity of the *character* whom he is to personate upon the stage. In order to acquire that familiarity, he must concentrate all his thoughts upon the character, and meditate diligently upon it until he has acquired a complete mastery of it. Some theatrical actors are known to devote years to the study of some one dramatic character, that they may be able to personate it perfectly. This is a trait in the conduct of an actor, that the Christian would do well to *imitate*. He should study carefully the nature, attributes, spirit, character, of that infinite *Being* whom he is called upon to imitate and *personate* in his Christian life. What a glorious subject for thought ! And how well it is calculated to expand the intellect, to purify the affections, to pacify the conscience, to stimulate every power of the soul, and elevate it in the scale of moral being !

Secondly : *He must have a genuine admiration for the character to be represented.* Man is the creature of his love. Whatever enlists his supreme *love*, ensures all his talents, time, and resources. For he will withhold nothing that may be demanded by the chief object of his affections. Thus the orator, the poet, and artist,—and in fact every intellectual aspirant, in whatever sphere of action he may be found,—is stimulated, by the *love* which he cherishes for his ideal, to labour persistently

until he has attained the excellence of which it is the embodiment. We never grow weary in *imitating* the object that we love. Here the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians to be "imitators of God, as dear (or loving) children." The stronger our love toward Him, the more faithfully shall we imitate Him.

Thirdly: *He must imbibe the spirit of the character that he represents.* It is generally desired that every attitude, gesture, look, tone, and facial expression be made conducive to the faithful *personation* of the character. So it should be with the Christian. He ought to live Christ—in every thought, feeling, and action. Thus putting off "the *old man* which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," and by a renewal of the spirit of the mind, "put on the *new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. The Christian's mind, and heart, and soul should become so thoroughly absorbed in the work of *personating* Christ, as that he would be utterly *oblivious of self*. So long as a person is conscious that the part he performs is simply *mechanical*, and not emanating from the deepest impulses of his being, it must necessarily be defective. The Christian must become self-oblivious if he would properly represent Christ. So that he can say, with Paul: "I live, yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*." Sublime experience! He suppressed the imperfections of his own nature, that the excellences of Christ may appear with greater conspicuity in his life. You see more of *Jesus* than of *Paul* in the real life of the Apostle. Self-consciousness is characteristic of vain-gloriousness; self-obliviousness is a mark of the humility of genuine worth. Those who shall have done the greatest amount of good in the world, when their merits will be publicly acknowledged by Christ, will then exclaim with sincere astonishment, "When saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee, or thirsty and gave Thee drink," etc. They will feel that whatever they had done, that it was due to the operations of His Spirit within them. They had entered into His Spirit, and His Spirit into them, and the result was, a glorious blessed *life*.

IV. THE THEATRE IN WHICH THIS MORAL DRAMA IS ACTED IS THE CHURCH.

By the Church in this place we do not mean any local ecclesiastical organization, but that moral state into which men are called by the Gospel, which is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, or the Church the body of Christ. This is not limited by time and place; but wherever there are Christians, this Church exists. The church-world, in a sense, is *within* the social world; but is, at the same time, separate and distinct from it, as the theatre, the stadium, and the amphitheatre were within the town or province, all three of which are employed by the Apostle to illustrate some important and practical truths in connection with Church life. We observe, therefore, that it is *conveniently* located. It is a central position, like that occupied by the Tabernacle in the camp of Israel. Its *entrance* is sufficiently wide to admit the vilest sinner, and at the same time so strait as to exclude the smallest sin. It is *capacious* enough to accommodate all that will come. It has never been overcrowded. The *exercises* are always *worthy*. The *terms* of admittance, without money and without price.

V. THE SPECTATORS OF THIS MORAL DRAMA.

In writing to the Corinthians, who were familiar with the amphitheatre, the theatre, and the stadium, the Apostle says that he had fought with beasts at Ephesus. His words again. We are become a *theatre* to the world, to angels and to men.

New York.

P. L. DAVIS, M. A.

Subject: Herod the Tetrarch.

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.”—MATT. xix. 1, 2.

THE whole narrative of which this is a part, has already been expounded by us.

We take these words of this imperial sceptic as suggesting,

I. THE BELIEVABILITY OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE BODY'S RESURRECTION. Herod's words, "This is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead," evidently show that a literal resurrection from the dead was a doctrine that even he, though a Sadducee and an unbeliever, could believe. His words implied,—

First : That he believed in the resurrection of the *identical* man. "This is John the Baptist." The very man who had denounced his conduct, the stern reformer whom he had murdered, he believed had come up from his grave. Herod's words implied,—

Secondly: That he believed the resurrection man possessed *supernatural* power. "Mighty works do show forth themselves in him." He had known John when alive, but had never known him to perform a miracle ; and perhaps, had a miracle, during his life, been ascribed to him, he would have denied the fact. He therefore seemed instinctively to feel that what a man could not accomplish during his life, he could do in his resurrection body. The Apostle Paul gives us to understand that the resurrection body would be endowed with attributes of a supernatural order. "It is sown in corruption," etc., etc.

Now we are not affirming that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and that the identical body will re-appear invested with super-mundane powers—this is not at present our point. All we say, is, that it is believable, for Herod believed in it. Modern sceptics say that a literal resurrection of the body involves so many difficulties, that no sensible man can believe in it; that the idea of a human body coming out of its grave is too great an absurdity for human credence. Whether there will be a literal resurrection or not, is not now our question ; all we say is, the thing is not unbelievable, for Herod believed in it. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead ?" What a child cannot do, a man can accomplish with ease. There may be difficulties, but difficulties are relative things. What are

difficulties to one being are not so to others. A difficulty must be looked upon in reference to the capability of the agent who is to perform it. To Omnipotence the idea of difficulty is absurd. We take the words of this imperial sceptic as suggesting,—

II. THE SELF-DISTRUSTFUL CHARACTER OF INFIDELITY. Herod was a Sadducee, and theoretically rejected the doctrine of the body's resurrection. Perhaps he often argued against the doctrine, often ridiculed it. But now for a moment he believes in it. Infidelity has but little strength, it is a reed shaken by every wind. It is not like true faith—well rooted and well grounded: it is based on negations. Infidelity is always self-distrustful. Hence its restless eagerness for controversy and debate. He that believeth shall not make haste. On the contrary, he that believeth not is always in haste; he has no repose; in one word, infidelity is weak, timid, superstitious. No creed has any real lasting substance, and can retain its hold upon a man that is not founded,—

First: In convictions *self-formed*. And,—

Secondly: In convictions *congenial with the moral constitution of the soul*. It must agree with our moral intuitions, innate cravings and aspirations. Hence infidelity can never stand. It is always shifting; what it denies to-day it will accept to-morrow.

We take the words of this imperial sceptic as suggesting —

III. THE CHARACTER OF A GUILTY CONSCIENCE. What was it that led Herod to the conclusion? Was it his *creed*? It is supposed he was a Sadducee, and that therefore he theoretically denied the doctrine of the body's resurrection. Was it his *wish*? Had he a strong desire that John should rise again—that he, whom at one time he was delighted to hear, but whom he murdered, should visit his courts again as the prophet of the Lord? It is proverbial that a man is very apt to believe what he enthusiastically desires. But Herod could not have had this desire. His desire must have been never to see his face again; to bury the very memory of John. “This is John the Baptist, whom I beheaded.”

The guilty conscience evoked from the regions of death, the murdered victim, brought him to his eye, and made his prophetic voice to fall again upon his ear. The mountains around him seemed to ring with the prophet's voice. (1) An awakened conscience will preach to a man doctrines that he never believed before. There is something in a man mightier than poetry, philosophy, or logic: it is conscience. (2) An awakened conscience will bring scenes the most repulsive to your view. It will haunt you with the ghosts of forgotten crimes. It will open the grave of the past, bring old sins to life, and make them look us in the face.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: RELIGIOUS FANATICISM.

"The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously."—2 KINGS ix. 20.

Jehu was a religious fanatic; his whole nature was on fire with indignation against the idolatry in his country under the reign of king Joram. Under this passion he perpetrated terrible enormities. He destroyed Jezebel, by ordering her to be thrown out through a window and having her body trampled in the dust (see verses 30-37). He then proceeded to exterminate the whole family of the idolatrous Ahab. He caused the heads of Ahab's sons to be cut off and to be thrown in two heaps at the

gates of the city (x. 8), and on all Ahab's family and adherents he wrought a general slaughter. "But the most revolting of these deeds of blood remains to be told. When he arrived at Samaria and had cut off every branch of the house of Ahab that he could find (2 Kings x. 17), he ordered a general convention of all the worshippers of Baal throughout the land, and made every arrangement as if he would have one united universal act of homage to the false god. And so strict were his orders, that no worshipper of Baal could absent himself but upon pain of death. They assembled; and we are told that not a man was absent. Each of the worshippers was furnished

with a peculiar dress, that they might be distinguished from all others; and when the assembly was convened, Jehu took pains to exclude every individual except the worshippers of Baal. As soon as they commenced their worship, Jehu appointed a detachment of eighty men to go in among the assembled idolaters and put every one of them to death; and to ensure the execution of his orders he ordained that, if a single worshipper escaped, the life of him who suffered the escape should be forfeited. But there was no escape; every individual was put to the sword; the image of Baal was broken down and destroyed; and the temple was made the receptacle of offal and filth, in contempt and abhorrence of the idolatry which had been practised there; and every trace of Baal's worship was blotted out of Israel."

We may take this man's history to illustrate some of the worst features of fanaticism.

I. It "driveth furiously," with a HEARTLESS DISREGARD TO THE LIVES OF ALL WHO DIFFER FROM IT. What cared Jehu for the lives of those who differed from him in religious opinion? Nothing. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and whosoever adopted religious views and practised religious rites con-

trary to his own, he slew indiscriminately; and he literally gloated over the blood he shed. His glowing zeal consumed all that was human in him, and turned him into a ruthless demon. What was human life to him, compared with his religious dogmas? It has ever been so, and still is, with religious fanaticism. Witness inquisitions, martyrdoms, crusades. And in milder forms the same thing is seen, even in connection with the Christian religion, in these days. What do your religious fanatics, who often assemble in thousands to hoot out their impious crudities, care for the bodily interests, health or life of those who differ from them? Religious fanaticism is essentially cruel.

II. It "driveth furiously" WITH AN OSTENTATIOUS SPIRIT. "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord" (2 Kings x. 16). Jehu really did not care "for the Lord" or for true theology. He cared only for himself—self-display, self-glory. He desired his contemporaries to honour him as a heaven-inspired knight, as one valiant for the truth. Fanaticism is essentially ostentatious. It creates a morbid hunger for the applause of men. It will itinerate the country, have preachments every day of the week, prayer-meetings all the day, and drive "furi-

ously" on ; but it will take good care to have the whole set forth in puffing advertisements and paraded in all the prints of the so-called "Christian world." "Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord." How unlike the true ministry of heaven, which does not cause its voice to be heard in the street, which does its work silently as the sunbeam.

"Fanaticism, soberly defined,
Is the false fire of an o'er-heated
mind ;
It views the truth with a distorted
eye,
And either warps or lays it use-
less by ;
'Tis narrow, selfish, arrogant and
draws
Its sordid nourishment from
man's applause ;
And while at heart sin unrelin-
quished lies,
Presumes itself chief favourite
of the skies."—*Cowper*.

III. It "driveth furiously"

UNDER THE COVER OF PRETENCE.

This Jehu resolved to destroy all the worshippers of Baal ; but how did he set to work in order to accomplish this end ? Not in a straightforward way. Inspiration tells us, "Jehu did it in subtilty." Under the pretence of having all the kingdom united in worshipping the false god, he ordered all the worshippers of Baal to assemble together on a certain day and in a certain place ; the order was universally obeyed, and we are told that not a man was absent ; but instead

of enlisting the multitudes in the cause of worship, he caused every man to be put to death. There is a somewhat popular impression, that fanaticism is always sincere. This is a mistake ; as a rule, it is a lying thing. As it works by falsehood, so it works under its cover. Some of the men who have taken the most prominent part in conventional revivals are amongst the swindlers of the age. "Fanaticism," says Professor Lange, "dissolves all the bonds of life and love, but imputes the blame of it to faith. It leads a man to acts of betrayal, of rebellion, and of murder, while he imagines that he is offering sacrifices acceptable to God. It institutes a community of hatred, in opposition to the community of love, and treats the fire of hell as if it were sacred. It appears in the guise of religion, but for the purpose of banishing Christ and His Gospel from the earth."

CONCLUSION:—Infer not, that because a minister, a community, or a Church are driving furiously in religious work, that they are religious. Genuine religion is a life, not a passion ; it is a river, silent and constant as the stars, not a flood rushing and roaring for the hour.

Subject: HOLY DEAD.

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."—HEB. vi. 12.

Dr. Davidson translates this verse thus: "That ye become not dull, but imitators of them who through faith and long-suffering inherit the promises."

The words suggest a few thoughts concerning the *holy dead*.

I. They have reached a VERY ELEVATED POSITION. They "inherit the promises." The promises, how comprehensive, numerous, and glorious!

First: They embrace *vast possessions*. It is an inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away." What an inheritance is that—how extensive, how fruitful, how enduring! It involves mansions, cities, etc., etc.

Secondly: they embrace *sublime fellowships*. What are the fellowships? The great and good men of all ages, the universe of angelic intelligences, Christ the Mediator of the new covenant, and God the Judge of all.

Thirdly: They embrace the most *perfect enjoyments*. "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to fountains of living waters."

Fourthly: They embrace *celestial royalties*. They speak of thrones, dominions, and powers, of sitting down on the throne with Christ, of being

made kings and priests unto God.

Such is the exalted position which the holy dead have reached. They have not gone out of existence, but are living and conscious, and are in possession of riches, joys, involving an eternal weight of glory.

II. They have reached an elevated position THROUGH A CERTAIN COURSE OF SPIRITUAL CONDUCT. "Who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

First: "Through *faith*." Faith in what? Not merely in doctrines, however divine, or in facts, however glorious, but in a *Person*, and that Person Christ. "He that believeth in Me." A strong unwavering practical trust in Christ as the All-wise, All-loving, Almighty Saviour, is the faith that conducted them to their exalted positions.

Secondly: Through "*patience*." Patience implies *sensibility*. There is a hardness of nature, a natural stoicism, that is often confounded with patience; but it has nothing to do with it. Where there is no tender susceptibility there can be no patience. Patience implies *suffering*. Sensibility may exist, and yet without suffering there could be no patience. Patience implies *waiting*. It is an endurance. It has its eye and heart on coming deliver

ance. Those who inherit the promises were men, while here, of *sensibility, suffering, and endurance*. "Ye have need of patience," etc. This is the path to that exalted state, it has to be reached, not by learning, not by ceremonies, not by merits, not by occasional services, but by "faith and patience," trust in Christ and patient endurance.

III. The course of spiritual conduct by which they reached their exalted position, is BINDING ON ALL SURVIVORS. "That ye be not slothful, but *followers* of them."

First: We must *imitate* them. We must have their "faith and patience." Our patience must be like theirs; in its object, faith, constancy, and practical influence. Our patience must be like theirs; we must bear up with a holy magnanimity under all the trials and sufferings of this life, awaiting the great deliverance.

Secondly: We must imitate them with *earnestness*. "Be not slothful." In truth, without earnestness we shall never imitate them at all: "faith and patience" require earnestness in order to attain, preserve, and strengthen.

CONCLUSION: "Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience

the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

Subject: THE DIVINITY OF A TRUE MAN.

"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything."—1 THESS. i. 6, 7, 8.

"The origin of the Church at Thessalonica is given in Acts xvii. Paul and his fellow labourers, Silas and Timothy, being driven out of Philippi, came to Thessalonica. Here was the principal synagogue of the country; and Paul, according to his custom, entered into it and taught. For three Sabbaths he preached to the Jews and the devout persons who came to worship, testifying that Jesus was the Christ. The result of his preaching is thus related by the sacred historian. "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." We are afterwards informed that the Jews excited the rabble to raise a tumult against the Christian preachers, in consequence of which Paul and

Silas were forced to leave the city secretly by night for Berea.

It would seem that the Church here was large and flourishing, and chiefly composed of Gentiles, for they are represented as having turned to God from idols.

We take these words as setting forth the fact that a genuine Christian is a *divine man*, that he has a close and vital connection with the Divine.

I. He is the RECIPIENT of the Divine. Paul speaks of the Christians at Thessalonica as "having received the word," that is, the word of the Lord. The "word" here is evidently the Gospel—that which Paul preached to them, and which, under his ministry, they received "in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." Although, through the persecution of the Jews, on the introduction of the Gospel by the Apostle amongst them, they endured much affliction, that affliction was more than counterbalanced by the "joy that they had of the Holy Ghost." What matters bodily suffering, if you have joy in the Holy Ghost? We glory in tribulation, etc. A genuine Christian is a man who has received into him the Divine word. God's great thoughts have come into his intellect, touched his heart, and given a new moral impulse to his being. He who has not re-

ceived this Divine word intelligently and with practical effect, is no Christian. The Christian is a living Bible, he is the "word made flesh."

II. He is an IMITATOR of the Divine. "Ye became followers of us and of the Lord." The Apostles were Christians because they were "followers" of the Lord; and all who would be Christians must do the same, they must become "followers of the Lord."

First: The Lord, that is Christ, is the most *perfect* moral model. In Him we have all that can command the attention and admiration of the soul.

Secondly: The Lord, that is Christ, is the most *imitable* moral model. Sublimely great as Christ is, no character ever appeared in history so imitable as His. (1) Because no character is so powerful to awake our admiration. What we admire most, we imitate most. (2) Because no character is so easily understood. He is perfectly transparent. One principle—love—explains all His moral features and activities. (3) Because no character is permanently consistent. Here then is another essential to the genuine Christian. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

III. He is an EXAMPLE of the Divine. "So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and

Achaia." The two provinces, Macedonia and Achaia together for the entire Greek domain; so that what is meant is, that these Thessalonian Christians who became imitators of the Apostles and their Lord, in their turn became examples to all Greeks. The genuine Christian not only receives and imitates, but reflects and radiates the Divine. He is the brightest and the fullest revelation of God on the earth; there is more of the Divine seen in the truly Christly soul than there is in the starry heavens and the blooming landscapes. "Ye are my witnesses," etc.

IV. He is a PROCLAIMER of the Divine. "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord." Sounded (*exēchetai*) is an image from a trumpet filling with its clear-sounding echo all the surrounding places. They sounded out the Gospel, not only in enthusiastic utterances, but in noble and generous deeds. Thessalonica was a large maritime and commercial city; and its Christian merchants would, in all their transactions with foreign traders, ring out the Gospel.

CONCLUSION: A genuine Christian, then, is a *Divine man*. There is in a moral, as well as in a constitutional sense, "divinity within him." He is the recipient, the imitator, the example, and the herald of the Divine.

Subject: INQUIRY OF THE PAST.

"For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there has been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?"—DEUT. iv. 32.

1. The past may refer (1) to general history. This the reference of Moses in the text. (2) To individual life. This the reference we would have you make now.

2. Inquiry of the past. (1) There are those who do not think about the past. This arises from (a) thoughtlessness; (b) conscious guilt; (c) a false philosophy. (2) It is our wisdom to "ask of the days that are past." (a) Because the past is in existence now. (b) Because for the past we are responsible. (c) Because the past is full of useful lessons.

I. Ask of past BLESSINGS. How have they been received?

1. The blessings. (1) Material. (2) Spiritual. Prayers answered, inspiring and uplifting influences imparted, help rendered, soul's need supplied, strength in trial, light in darkness, wisdom in ignorance, discipline to purify and perfect. No good withheld. 2. Their reception. Have they been received (1) as from God? (2) As undeserved mercies? (3) In a thankful spirit?

II. Ask of past OPPORTUNI-

TIES. How have they been used ?

1. Opportunities of *getting* good. (1) Mental good ; (2) moral good. Have they been turned to profit, or lost forever ? 2. Opportunities of *doing* good. (1) To the bodies of men. (2) To the souls of men. Instructing the ignorant, guiding the perplexed, comforting the sorrowful, rebuking the sinner, reclaiming the erring, speaking the word in season, inviting our neighbours to hear the Gospel, training our families, stimulating men to live higher lives. Are we not verily guilty of neglect ?

III. Ask of past sins. Have they been repented of and pardoned ? 1. Sins of omission. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." 2. Sins of commission. (1) Against God, irreverence, unsubmitiveness, ingratitude, unfaithfulness. (2) Against man, injustice, untruthfulness, uncharitableness.

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ; but if we confess our sin," etc.

T. B.

Subject : THE CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL POWER.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out ? And Jesus

said unto them, Because of your unbelief : for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place ; and it shall remove ; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."—MATT. xvii. 19-21.

INTRODUCTION. The historical circumstance and its symbolical teaching. Faith the condition of spiritual power.

I. ITS OBJECTS. Upon what must our faith be exercised ?

1. We must have faith in God, as the source of salvation—

(1) In his perpetual presence,

(2) In His unvarying power,

(3) In His faithful promise.

2. We must have faith in man, as the subject of salvation—

(1) In his inherent depravity,

(2) In his religious possibilities, (3) In his infinite worth.

3. We must have faith in the gospel as the instrument of salvation. Must not yield to the clamour for something more advanced, nor listen to the charge that Christianity is effete (Rom. i. 16).

II. ITS POSSIBILITIES. "If ye have faith as a grain," etc.

1. Their *Range*. "Ye shall say unto this mountain." (1)

Does the range of faith's possibilities comprehend the working of physical miracles ? This cannot be inferred from the phraseology of the text, even on the supposition of its literal interpretation, for it was spoken in the age of miracles. We think that it cannot be inferred either from

any other passage. Supernatural powers (in a physical sense) now unnecessary. Their perpetuation would frustrate the purpose for which given, and would be inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. (2) Their range does comprehend the working of unlimited moral miracles. Mountains of prejudice, ignorance, misery, and sin are removable by true faith.

2. Their *Philosophy*. What is the connection between faith and power? (1) There is the connection of Divine appointment. God has ordained it as one of the fixed laws of the spiritual universe. Faith links on the machinery of the spiritual universe to the power of God. (2) There is the connection of reflex influence. This divine law not an arbitrary one, but founded in the inherent and everlasting fitness of things. Faith is an imperial stimulant in the soul of man. It is (a) the spring of activity. (b) The soul of tenacity. (c) The death of fear. (d) The inspiration of self-sacrifice. (e) The root of holiness. (3) There is the connection of relative contagion. Our faith inspires faith in others. We believe in the man who himself believes. When the world begins really to believe that the Church means what it says, and is thoroughly and consistently in earnest,

the results will be marvellous. All the devils in humanity will be driven out in terror and confusion.

III. ITS VIOLATION "unbelief." 1. The fact of unbelief. The Church is, in this age, violating the condition of spiritual power: hence its weakness. This proved by resort to and dependence on questionable expedients; sensational tricks to trap men into the Church. 2. The causes of unbelief. (1) The atmosphere of infidelity by which we are surrounded. (2) The spirit of self-gratification in which we indulge. (3) The habit of undevotion into which we have fallen.

CONCLUSION: "Lord, increase our faith." "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion." Oh for a mightier faith in man, in the fact of his sinfulness, in the reality of his danger, in the infinitude of his worth! A mightier faith in Jesus Christ, in the history of His life, in the efficacy of His death, in the power of His intercession! A mightier faith in Christianity, in the universality of its provisions, in the success of its proclamation! A mightier faith in the Holy Ghost, in the reality of His influences, in the necessity of His power, in the largeness and faithfulness of His promise! A mightier faith in the unseen, in the reality of its existence, in the importance of its interests, in its

nearness to our being! A mightier faith in the future, in the certainty of millennial blessedness, in the solemnities

of the Judgment Day, in the loveliness of heaven, and in the terribleness of hell!

T. BARON.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Having passed rapidly through HOSEA, JOEL and AMOS, we come now to OBADIAH. Of the history of Obadiah we literally know nothing. His name, which signifies Worshipper of Jehovah, and his short prophecy afford the only information concerning him. From verses 11 to 14, which undoubtedly contain an allusion to the exultation of the Edomites over the capture and plunder of Jerusalem, we may with some confidence infer that he flourished after the capture of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans. In all probability he must have lived near the time of Jeremiah; and indeed there is almost a verbal agreement between his utterance in verses 1 to 8 and those contained in Jeremiah xlix. If we suppose his prophecy was delivered between the year B. C. 558, when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, and the termination of the siege of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, we shall not be far wrong. As to his prophecy, it is the *shortest* in the Bible; one chapter comprehends all. Its *subject* is the destruction of Edom, on account of its cruelty to Judah, Edom's mother, and the restoration of the Jews. Its *style* is marked by animation, regularity, and clearness.

No. CXV.

Subject: SOCIAL RETRIBUTION.

"For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen: as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head."—OBADIAH i, 15.

In the preceding number we have furnished outlines of three homilies on the first sixteen verses of this chapter. *Social cruelty* we considered as the grand subject of the whole. This was presented

(1) as a sin against the Creator; and this was proved by the constitution of the human soul, the common relation of the race to God, the common interest of Christ in the race, and the universal teaching of the Bible. This social cruelty was presented (2) as when perpetrated against a *brother*, specially offensive to God. And three reasons were mentioned for this—the obligation to love a brother is stronger, the chief human institution is outraged, and the tenderest

human loves are wounded. This social cruelty was presented (3) as working in various forms from generation to generation. In this view it was shown that cruelty has various forms of working, that Omniscience observes it in all its workings, and that a terrible retribution awaits it in all its forms.

Now *Social Retribution* is the subject of the text before us, and this subject we have only just touched upon on p. 171.

There are two great popular errors concerning the subject of Retribution.

First: *That retribution is reserved entirely for the future state.* That the future state will be a state of retribution—a state in which every man shall be rewarded according to his works, must be admitted by every thoughtful student of the Bible. But retribution is here, retribution is an eternal principle of the Divine government, it follows sin at all times and for ever. The men and nations whose acts are registered in the Bible proclaim the grand truth, “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed on the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner.” “Bishop Butler, in accordance with the same doctrine, lays it down as an axiom, that this life is the allotted and appointed period of retributive justice. Having assumed this as an undoubted fact, he proceeds to infer therefrom, the certainty of the future judgment. How many masters in Israel arrive at the same wholesome conclusion on quite opposite premises—the entire absence of systematic retributive justice during this life!

‘We find,’ he says, ‘that the true notion of the Author of our nature is that of a Master or Governor, prior to the consideration of his moral attributes. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that He actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants, subjects, are rewarded and punished by those who govern them.’” Did not retributive justice strike our first parents and Cain at once? Did it not strike the antediluvian world, Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.?

Another popular error concerning retribution is—

Secondly: That it is a *special infliction of God*. We do not say that God may not break through the established order of things to inflict punishment, nor that He has not done so, for the Bible furnishes us with instances to the contrary. All we say is, this is not the general rule. Divine punishments are natural events. Divine justice works as naturally as Divine goodness. Sin and punishment are indissolubly linked as cause and effect.

The text suggests two thoughts in relation to *social retribution*.

I. That it is OFTENTIMES A RETURN TO THE OFFENDER OF THE SAME KIND OF SUFFERING AS HE INFLICTED ON HIS VICTIM. “As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.” The bitter cup thou hast given to thine enemy shall come

round to thee, and of its dregs thou shalt drink." This principle is stated by Christ. "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." The Bible is full of examples of this principle. Isaac told a lie, affirming that his wife is his sister, and he is told a lie by his son Jacob, who declared himself to be Esau. Jacob had deceived his aged parent in relation to Esau, his sons deceive him with regard to Joseph. He had embittered the declining years of his aged sire, his children embittered his. Again, Joseph was sold by his brethren as a bond-servant into Egypt: in Egypt his brethren are compelled to resign themselves as bond-servants to him. All history is full of examples, and everywhere in modern society illustrative cases may be selected. The deceiver himself is deceived, the fraudulent is himself cheated, the hater is himself hated, the cruel is often ruthlessly treated. Thus, "as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee."

"Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies;
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies."—*Cowper*.

Another remark suggested in relation to *social retribution* is—

II. That it often APPEARS TO COME AS A SPECIAL VISITATION OF ALMIGHTY GOD. "The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen." All days are His days. But it is not until the guilty conscience is smitten with a sense of sin that it sees Him and feels that the day is full of God. Electricity pervades the universe, is ubi-

quitous; but men become conscious of it, and talk of it only when it flashes in lightning and breaks in thunder. So with God's justice. It is everywhere; but when the guilty conscience feels its punitive touch it calls it the day of judgment. The righteous are *now* going into life eternal, every righteous deed is a step onward: the wicked are *now* going into everlasting punishment, with every sin they tramp downward.

CONCLUSION:—Learn that no soul can sin with impunity, that every sin carries with it punishment. "The gods are just, and of our present vices make whips to scourge us." It may be, indeed, through the deadness of your conscience and the superabundant mercies of this life, you may not feel the retributive lash as you will feel it at some future time. But retribution is working here.

"We still have judgment here
that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return
To plague the inventor. This even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
To our own lips."—*Shakspeare*.

NO. CXVI.

Subject: THE TRUE CHURCH, OR THE COMMUNITY OF THE GOOD. (1) A BENEFICENT POWER.

"But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.—OBADIAH i. 17.

Obadiah here commences his predictions respecting the re-

storation of the Jews from Babylonish captivity, their re-occupation of Canaan, and the reign of the Messiah. While the surrounding nations were to disappear, the Jews should regain the possession of the land of their fathers. Mount Zion may be taken here as the symbol of the true church of God, that is, the community of godly men existing on this earth. In this sense it is referred to in Hebrews. Here the whole passage may be taken as representing this true Church or godly community in three aspects—as a beneficent power, a consuming power, and an aggressive power. The subject of the sketch should be the first subject, viz. as the beneficent power, and this we have in the seventeenth verse. Three thoughts are suggested by the words concerning the Church as a beneficent power.

I. It is connected with DELIVERANCE. “Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance.” Mount Zion was the asylum for those who had escaped. In Mount Zion shall be the *escaped*. From Babylonian captivity and suffering they returned to Mount Zion, or Jerusalem, and were safe. There they enjoyed their old protection. In the true Church there is spiritual safety; it is a refuge that is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. It is watched by the infinite love and guarded by the almighty power of Christ; its blessed Keeper never slumbers nor sleeps. Oh ye imperilled spirits pursued by the powers of hell, led by the devil, captives and sold under sin, flee to

this Mount Zion, this true Church of God, this community of godly men, which is at once the organ and the residence of Christ.

II. It is connected with PURITY. “There shall be holiness.” Moral pollution, or sin, is the source of all the calamities that befall men. Mount Zion is a consecrated spot. If there is holiness anywhere it is in connection with that community of men called the Church, which embraces the principles, cherishes the spirit, follows the example of the Son of God. True, they are not perfect yet; but they are in the process of cleansing, and are already holy as compared with the pollutions of the ungodly world.

III. It is connected with ENJOYMENT. “And the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.” “Though the houses of Jacob and Joseph are here spoken of separately, it was not the intention of the prophet to teach that the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel would be re-established. Yet the special mention of Joseph clearly shows that the ten tribes were to return at the same time, and, jointly with Judah and Benjamin, to possess the land of Palestine and the neighbouring regions. See Isaiah xi. 12-14; Hosea i. 11. The restored Hebrews would unitedly subdue the Idumæans; which they did in the time of John Hyrcanus, who compelled them to be circumcised, and so incorporated them with the Jews that they henceforward formed part of the nation.”

The word “possess” here means *enjoy*: enjoy their possessions. The community of the

true Church alone enjoy their possessions. They are a happy people; all things are theirs; they are full of joy; they even glory in tribulation. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound."

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No. CXVII.

Subject: THE TRUE CHURCH,
OR THE COMMUNITY OF THE
GOOD. (2) A CONSUMING
POWER.

"And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau: for the Lord hath spoken it."—OBADIAH i. 18.

There is a fire in the true Church. Notice—

I. The CHARACTERISTICS THIS FIRE DISPLAYS. What is the fire? The fire of *truth*, that burns up error; the fire of *right*, that burns up wickedness; the fire of *love*, that burns up selfishness. "I am come," said Christ, "to kindle a fire upon the earth." "Is not my word like a fire?" First: The fire in the Church is a *strong* fire. It has burnt an enormous amount of wickedness in every form, age, and land. It has burnt through the fiercest storms of centuries. Secondly: It is an *extending* fire. Its flames are ever advancing, they reach farther to-day than ever. The most brilliant systems of men, ethical, theological, and philosophic, however brilliant, have been but sparks compared to this; they have burnt on a little and gone out in darkness. Thirdly: It is a *steady* fire. It

does not flare and flash, but burns its way silently wherever it goes. Fourthly: It is an *unquenchable* fire. Men have tried to put it out, oceans of infidelity and depravity have been poured upon it, but it burns on. Notice—

II. The MATERIALS THIS FIRE CONSUMES. "Stubble." What is moral depravity in all its forms—theoretical and practical, religious, social, political? What is it, however old, however decorated with worldly power and grandeur? What is it. "*Stubble*." It is not a rock, that stands fixed amidst the surges of time; not a tree, that has roots that may grow for ever; it is mere stubble, dry, sapless, worthless "*stubble*," ready for the fire. Error to truth, wrong to right, malice to love, is but stubble to fire.

CONCLUSION.—God speed this fire until the whole world of wickedness shall be destroyed, until its heavens be dissolved, its earth burnt up, and its elements melt with fervent heat, and there come out of it "a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

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No. CXVIII.

Subject: THE TRUE CHURCH,
OR THE COMMUNITY OF THE
GOOD. (3) AN AGGRESSIVE
POWER.

"And they of the south shall possess the mount of Esau; and they of the plain the Philistines; and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; and Benjamin shall possess Gilead. And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel shall possess that of the Canaan-

ites, even unto Zarephath; and the captivity of Jerusalem, which is in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south."—OBADIAH i. 19, 20.

By the "south" or southern part of Palestine, is here meant those who should occupy it; and by the "plain," those who should occupy the low country along the shore of the Mediterranean.

According to the relative positions of those who should take possession of the different parts of the Holy Land, was to be the enlargement of their territory by the annexation of the adjoining regions which had formerly been occupied by allies or hostile powers. As there is no subject specified before the country of Edom and the country of Samaria, it seems to be intimated that the regions of Ephraim and Samaria were to be occupied by the Jews and the Israelites jointly, without any regard to tribal distinctions; and the reason why the tribe of Benjamin is mentioned, is merely on account of the proximity of Gilead to the territory which it originally possessed.—*E/zas*. "The promise here," says an old expositor, "no doubt has a spiritual signification, and had its accomplishment in the setting up of the Christian Church, the Gospel—Israel in the world; and shall have its accomplishment more and more in the enlargement of it, and the additions made to it, till the mystical body is completed. When ministers and Christians prevail with their neighbours to come to Christ, to yield themselves to the Lord, they possess them. The converts

that Abraham had made are said to be the souls that he had gotten (Gen. xii. 5). The possession is gained, not *vi et armis*—by force and arms; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual; it is by the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of Divine grace going along with it, that this possession is got and kept."

That the true Church is an aggressive power will appear from considering the *Gospel*, which is at once its inspiration, its life, and its instrument. Consider therefore,—

I. THE ELEMENTS OF WHICH THE GOSPEL IS COMPOSED. It is made up of two great elements, "grace and truth," that is, eternal reality and Divine benevolence. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." To show the aggressiveness of these two principles, two facts may be stated.

First: That the human soul is made to feel their *imperial* force. It is true that the soul in its unregenerate state is ruled by directly opposite elements—error and selfishness. But even error has power over it only so long as it regards it as reality, and selfishness influences it under the guise of love. It is the truth when made clear to it that comes with a conquering power; it is love or grace that transports its heart. The human soul is made for these two elements.

Secondly: That the human soul is bound to *yearn* after these elements as its highest good. Its deep hunger is for truth and for reality, for benevolence or love. It has no natural hunger for error, no natural hunger for selfishness,

Thirdly : That the human soul is everywhere *restless* without these elements. It is only as the soul gets truth and grace into it that it becomes settled, calm, self - united. These are facts connected with the human soul, and these facts show the aggressiveness of the Gospel. Consider,—

II. THE PROSELYTIZING SPIRIT WHICH THE GOSPEL ENGENDERS. As soon as ever the Gospel takes real possession of a soul, that soul becomes intensely solicitous to spread it abroad. It becomes what Jeremiah describes as a “fire in the bones.” Peter said, “We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard.” Paul said, “The love of Christ constraineth us because we thus judge,” etc. “Necessity is laid upon us.” Every genuine recipient, then, of the Gospel becomes a missionary, a propagandist, a moral knight, to battle against the mighty hosts of error and selfishness. Each member of the true

Church or godly community becomes, by a moral necessity, a soldier of the Cross. Consider—

III. THE TRIUMPHS WHICH THE GOSPEL HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED. Compare the influence of the Gospel in the world now to what it was when Christ was on earth. It was then confined to one lonely soul, the soul of Jesus of Nazareth ; it is now in the possession of millions. The springlet has become an Amazon ; the grain has covered islands and continents ; the little stone has grown into a mountain that bids fair to fill the earth.

CONCLUSION.—Such thoughts as these tend, we think, to demonstrate the essential aggressiveness of the true Church. It will one day take possession of all heathendom, with its “mount of Esau,” the “plains of the Philistines,” the “fields of Ephraim” and the “fields of Samaria,” and what Canaanites there are as far as Zarephath.

THE OPPRESSOR AND THE OPPRESSED.—The oppressor is even more to be pitied than the oppressed, the persecutor than the persecuted, the slave-driver than the slave. We should rather stand up at the stake with Servetus than sit with Calvin on the judgment-seat. We should prefer to eat a crust with Chatterton, rather than partake of certain repasts, in short, to fare with Lazarus instead of feasting with Dives. This brief life once closed, all tyranny is at an end ; but how shall it fare with the tyrant before the Chancery of heaven. Alas ! he knew it not or knowing felt not what he did. Be ye comforted then, brother, for the developed soul will rue the evil it has done. The victim shall have compassion on his oppressor, and divinest compassions be rendered before high heaven. For God, having made man for an excellent end, will not abandon the development of his destiny.—*Dr. M'Cormac.*

Biblical Criticism.

Subject : The Christian Race.

Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν, δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα, ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως, ἱρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς, ὑπέμεινε σταυρὸν, αἰσχίνης καταφρονήσας, ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐκάθισεν.—**HEB. xii. 1, 2.**

Τοιγαροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς. It has been well observed, that *τοιγαροῦν*, a full and sonorous conjunction which occurs only another time in the New Testament, and that in Paul's writings, is most happily chosen here as marking the commencement of a lengthened admonition grounded upon the long list of cases already detailed. *Καὶ* refers to these cases, and means that we also, like the ancients, should rouse ourselves to action. There is in our version an unhappy transposition of the words, which puts a sentiment into the verse that is not in the original. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with a cloud of witnesses." This implies that the ancients too had been surrounded with witnesses during their struggle. Although this may have been the case, yet no such sentiment is expressed in the original. The meaning is : "Wherefore let us also, seeing we are surrounded with witnesses, run."

Τοσοῦτον ἔχοντες περικείμενον ἡμῖν νέφος μαρτύρων. There are many examples in the Greek authors of *νέφος* used to denote a multitude. The persons referred to without a doubt are the ancient believers, whose achievements and sufferings are recorded in the preceding chapter. They are designated *μαρτύρων*. The Greek word *μάρτυς*, like our own term witness, sometimes means persons who bear testimony to a truth or fact previously known to them, and sometimes it means persons who are present to behold what is done, whether they give evidence regarding it or not. According to the former view, the term would refer to ancient believers as having borne testimony by their lives and by their death to God's faithfulness and truth. According to the latter, it would

represent them as present to behold the struggles and conflicts of believers, their own race having been long since successfully finished. In favour of the latter view decisive evidence is furnished by the phrase *περικείμενον ἡμῖν*, which represents the crowd of witnesses as placed around the Hebrews during their struggle ; and the idea of their presence is employed to stimulate the followers of Christ to unfaltering zeal and effort. Still, however, the question may be raised, whether this passage really teaches that departed saints do continue to know and take an interest in what is done upon the earth ; or whether the Apostle's representation is merely to be viewed as part of the machinery employed to complete the representation of a scene of contest. At the Olympic games there was the course, there was the goal, there were runners, there were judges, there were spectators. The Christian life, too, is a race, and the Apostle surrounds the course with a crowd of spectators ; but are we warranted from such a figurative description to infer that Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and David, and Samuel are actually present to behold us, while we strain every nerve to reach the goal ? Such a conclusion might be more than the passage could well sustain. Yet the crowd of spectators must mean something ; otherwise the Apostle employs a motive which, after all, is a mere fancy. Does it not then seem necessary to suppose that, although departed saints may not actually be standing around to watch our movements, yet through some channel or other they are acquainted with the course which we are pursuing ? If the Apostle had simply said, that while running the race set before us we should imagine ourselves to be surrounded by the saints of bygone days, and strive to act as we would do if they were really present—then we should have understood that he did not mean to insinuate that they really knew anything of what we are doing. His language is altogether different from this. He says, we ought to run with alacrity, because we have a multitude of invisible witnesses around us. Where a similar scene is described by Paul, in 1 Cor. iv. 9, he says, “ we are

a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men." Does not this imply that angels are acquainted with our procedure on earth? Is there not the same ground in the clause under consideration for extending this knowledge to the spirits of just men made perfect? Doubtless the whole representation of the Christian life as a race is figurative; but if we may set aside the spectators whom the apostle places upon the scene, and maintain that they know nothing at all about us, why may we not equally set aside the Judge, and affirm that He takes no cognizance of our procedure? Yea, why may we not annihilate the race itself, and set the whole down as a dream? Doubtless, in the interpretation of figurative language, there is a danger of understanding it too literally and grossly; but equally, on the other, there is a danger of robbing it of all significancy whatever. The gross view of the *νέφος μαρτύρων* would be, that departed saints are drawn up in ranks beside us to mark our steps. The correct and proper view seems to be, that they really do know something of us and feel an interest in our faithful and persevering service of Christ.

From the description of the spectators the Apostle passes on to mention the preparations needful for successfully running the Christian race: *ὄγκον ἀποθέμενοι πάντα καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν*. The word *ὄγκος* signifies a tumour, a swelling, any augmentation of size beyond the normal bulk. It also signifies weight or encumbrance. The signification of corpulency, although favoured by Bleek and Tholuck and others, is altogether unsuitable here: for how could a runner lay aside his superabundant flesh when the spectators have already appeared upon the ground? Abstinence and regimen require a length of time to produce their effect upon the body. Doubtless, therefore, weight or encumbrance is the meaning to be assigned to the word here; and everything must be included which the runner may have about his person, even all superabundant clothing. But the language of the Apostle is figurative, and therefore the question arises, What does it mean when applied to believers? It is a very common idea, that it means sin in general as the main hindrance to a godly career. And

there could be no doubt at all in regard to this view if the phrase *καὶ τὴν εὐπερίστατον ἁμαρτίαν* were not subjoined ; but the conjunction of the two phrases involves the question in considerable difficulty. Is the second explanatory of the first, or does it exhibit something that is completely new, or does it bring prominently forward something already included in *ὄγκος*, and differing from it as species from genus ? Ebrard contends that the two expressions must be exclusive of one another, and that consequently *ὄγκος* must refer to things not sinful in themselves, yet calculated to impede religious progress. But he overlooked the circumstance that the two phrases are not homogeneous. The one applies literally to a runner and the other applies literally to a Christian. Were they homogeneous, there would be no room for doubt that they referred to different kinds of hindrance ; but their mixed character, as literal and figurative, renders it probable that the one is an explanation of the other. What *ὄγκος* is to a race, that *ἁμαρτία* is to a Christian. Yet we are not obliged to suppose that the two are exactly commensurate. Expounded of the Christian, *ὄγκος* must mean everything calculated to retard his progress—mistaken ideas of religion, such as many of the Jews entertained, too great entanglement with the affairs of life, and all sinful affections and practices ; all these come under the comprehensive phrase *πάντα ὄγκον* ; and then *τὴν ἁμαρτίαν* is added to bring into view what is the principal burden and what in fact gives to everything else its power of being a burden. Were you, for the purpose of maintaining a complete distinction between the phrases, to suppose *ὄγκος* descriptive only of the cares of life and such things as were not sinful in themselves, then you would have nothing in the literal runner that afforded a counterpart to sin in the Christian. Were you, on the other hand, to make *ὄγκος* and *ἁμαρτία* exactly commensurate, then it would be implied that nothing could be obstructive of the Christian's course unless it were sinful *per se*.

The epithet applied to *ἁμαρτίαν* requires particular notice. *Εὐπερίστατος* occurs nowhere else within the whole compass of

Greek literature, and therefore its meaning must be settled simply on etymological grounds and by means of the context. Various significations have been proposed, grounded on the meaning of *περίστασις*, *περίστατος*, and *περίσθημι*. *Περίστασις* signifies circumstances, engagements of life, also a reverse, peril. It has therefore been argued by Salmasius, that *ἐνπερίστατος* may signify greatly involved in affairs, and by Kypke, looking at the last signification of the noun, viz., peril, that it may mean exposed to danger. But Tholuck objects to both these meanings that they rather describe the predicates of a person than of a thing. Another meaning of *περίστασις* is a crowd standing round, whence *περίστατος* is used to signify, surrounded and admired by the crowd: *ἐνπερίστατος*, therefore, might naturally enough bear the same signification intensified, viz., greatly admired, and much followed after, and this is the signification adopted by Wetstein and Bœhene; but though it seems defensible on etymological grounds and has this great argument in its favour that it follows the analogy of the actually existing adjective *περίστατος*, yet it does not well suit the scope of the Apostle's discourse. Again, the verb *περίσθημι* signifies to bring round to one's own views, to change to the worse, and therefore Carpzov and Shulz assign to *ἐνπερίστατος* the signification of seducing, deceitful alluring on all sides. The idea exactly suits the scope of the passage, deceitfulness being one of the leading characteristics of sin; but it has been objected to this view, that all the adjectives in *τος* formed from *ῖσθημι* or any of its compounds, have an intransitive or passive signification. Again, *περίστασθαι* in the middle signifies to place oneself round, to surround; and therefore it has been concluded that the adjective *ἐνπερίστατος* may mean readily surrounding a person, cleaving to him. This signification has drawn around it the greatest number of supporters. It seems to rest upon a sound etymological basis, and it gives a description of sin which is perfectly just in itself and which exactly suits the complexion of the passage. Sin is an encumbrance which cleaves to man—it besets him on all sides. “Easily besetting” is a pretty good translation, yet it is apt to suggest the idea

of an enemy conducting an assault ; but the governing participle *ἀποθέμενοι* requires that sin be considered, not in the light of a foe advancing upon us, but rather as something which clings fast to us, so as to impede our movements. It surrounds us as ivy does trees. We must throw it aside, if we would run successfully the Christian race.

It is a very common idea, that the Apostle is here speaking, not of sin in general, but of the particular sins which individuals feel themselves to be most liable to fall into, so that besetting sin has become quite synonymous with favourite vice. This view is grounded upon the English version, and receives no countenance from the Greek phrase, which points to sin in general and describes it as cleaving too closely to man. If there was any one sin more in the Apostle's view than another, it was probably apostasy, into which many circumstances conspired at that time to seduce men ; but the language employed is quite general and cannot mean the favourite sins of different individuals. Each is admonished to lay aside all sin, and doubtless common sense dictates that the greatest effort should be made to overcome those evil inclinations which we are sensible have the greatest power over us.

All needful preparation having thus been made for the race we must run with strenuous effort, *δι' ὑπομονῆς τρέχωμεν τὸν προκείμενον ἡμῖν ἀγῶνα*. Beza understands *ἀγῶνα* to mean the ground where the contest in question takes place ; but in the New Testament the word almost always designates the struggle itself. The word is of a general kind, and means any conflict ; but here it must be understood of a race. *Προκείμενον ἡμῖν* expresses the idea that the race is set before us or assigned to us, and it is our duty to run *δι' ὑπομονῆς*, with patience. *Ὑπομονή*, however, involves fully more of the idea of activity than our word patience. It means constancy, endurance. There are many difficulties to be encountered by the Christian. There is a course marked out for him by his Lord. And he must pursue it at all hazards. The very idea of a race involves the necessity of strenuous exertion. We must be prepared for fatigue and toil. The runner too was obliged to

pursue a definite course. If he overleaped certain barriers, he excluded himself from all hope of the prize. So must we not merely run, but we must run the race set before us. The course is prescribed in Scripture. Barriers are erected all along the line, and we must keep within the lines assigned to us. If we disregard these, it is not the Lord's race we are running, but a race of our own ; and in the end we shall have the fearful disappointment of finding that the prize is not for us. Run strenuously, run in the right course.

Having surrounded the scene of action with spectators in order to animate the runners, the Apostle next brings into view a motive of a far higher kind, viz., the example of the Lord Jesus Christ : ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν—looking unto Jesus, etc. Ἀφορῶντες is a most appropriate word. It has nearly the same signification as ἀπέβλεπεν in chap. xi. 26. It indicates a concentration of the mind upon some special object, to the exclusion of other things that may be courting the attention. The Christian must look away from much that is near at hand and very attractive, and fix his eye upon the Saviour, who is waiting to receive him at the end of his career. So the runner in an earthly race looks neither to the right hand nor to the left, but straight on to the place where the judge is seated.

In this verse there is a description presented of what Jesus is, of what He has done, and of the glorious reward which He has received on high, all designed to stir up believers to the earnest and faithful imitation of His example. What Christ is, is exhibited in these words : τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν. Various views have been taken of this clause. Schlichting, Stuart, and others conceive it to describe our Lord as the founder and consummator of the Christian religion. And doubtless there are passages where πίστις means, by metonymy, the truth believed, as in Acts vi. 7, “the priests became obedient to the faith,” that is, embraced the Gospel ; and Jude 3, “the faith once delivered to the saints.” But it is a conclusive argument against this exposition, that throughout the whole passage upon which our text is grounded,

and of the subject handled in which it furnishes an additional illustration, the word *πίστις* means, not an objective scheme of truth, but the subjective feeling of faith in the minds of men.

Others therefore, as Chrysos., Theophy., J. Capellus, Estius, understand *πίστις* to mean our faith ; and they view the clause as declaring that Christ originates faith in our bosoms, or gives occasion by His work for the existence of faith in us, and also by His spirit strengthens the principle until it reach perfection. He supplies the materials and kindles the fire ; He also fans it into a bright and durable flame. He sows the seed, and ripens it. And in defence of this view, appeal is made to Heb. ii. 10, where *ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν* undoubtedly does mean author, or source of their salvation. But if this had been the idea which the Apostle meant to express, *ἡμῶν* must necessarily have been added to *πίστις* to indicate the seat of the faith spoken of. Besides there is another consideration which supplies an argument of equal strength against both the views already stated, viz., that the object of the Apostle in this verse is not to exhibit Christ's claim to our gratitude, but to hold Him up as a model for us to copy.

All the saints mentioned in the preceding chapter were patterns more or less worthy of imitation ; but Christ is the great pattern of every excellence. He is the perfect model of every grace. The ancient saints were all possessed of faith, and they manifested their trust in God more or less perfectly ; they laboured, they suffered, they died on account of their principles. But nothing that has been evinced among men of trust in God, can be compared with the life of Christ, who, amid the terrible scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary and the darkness which extorted from Him the fearful cry, " My God ! " persevered in His work and executed the will of His Father : " He endured the cross, despising the shame." We may learn much from the ancient saints ; but if we want a perfect model of faith, we must look to Christ. Unquestionably, therefore, if the words can be viewed as descriptive of the faith of Christ Himself, they will best fall in with the scope of the passage. An objection, however, to this interpretation readily suggests

itself, grounded upon the consideration that Christ is commonly exhibited as the object of faith, and not at all as the subject of it. But we must remember that *πίστις* in the whole of this passage has a more general signification than it bears in Romans. It means simply, trust in God, or faith in God's promises. Now Christ displayed this trust as really as the ancient saints, and in a far higher degree ; and His sufferings and death were fitted to teach the same lessons as the martyrdom of any martyrs who have ever sealed their testimony with their blood. Now in this view what are the ideas we must attach to *ἀρχηγός* and *τελειωτής* ? The former has been viewed as meaning leader of faith, in the sense of exhibiting an example of it. A perfectly similar use of the word is to be found in Micah i. 13, where *ἀρχηγός ἀμαρτίας αὐτῆ ἐστὶ τῇ θυγατρὶ Σιών* means "she is the ringleader in sin to the daughter of Zion." Then *τελειωτής*, which occurs in no other Greek writer, must be viewed as expressing the idea that He carried faith to perfection. He took the lead in regard to faith, and He exhibited the most perfect model of it. He was the leader and perfect specimen of both.

In complete accordance with this view is the description of Christ's conduct which follows, showing how His trust in God manifested itself : *ὅς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς, ὑπέμεινε σταυρὸν*. Two modes of explaining the clause *ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς* have prevailed, springing from the different views taken of the preposition *ἀντί*. The more common acceptance of the word is, instead of, in the room of; and therefore many conceive the joy spoken of to be what Christ gave up or sacrificed when He prepared to encounter death. And some, as Gregory Naz. and Beza, conceive this joy to be the blessedness which He possessed in heaven before His incarnation, thus making the passage parallel to the statement in Philippians: "He was in the form of God, yet humbled Himself and became obedient to death." But the word *προκειμένης* does not at all comport with this view ; for the felicity of Christ prior to His incarnation was not a thing offered to Him, but actually enjoyed. Others therefore, as Chrysostom, Theophylact, Capellus, Calvin,

Luther, still viewing the joy as something sacrificed, consider it to be the happiness which Christ might have enjoyed upon earth, if He had chosen to put away the cross from Him. But although this interpretation is quite consistent with the more common meaning of *ἀντί*, and also gives its proper force to *προκειμένης*; yet it introduces an idea quite foreign to the position and character of Christ: for what joy can we conceive a residence in this world fitted to impart to the Son of God, after His work was abandoned? What was temporal happiness to Him, or the possession of all the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them? The word *χαρὰ* carries the mind to something altogether different; and it is frequently used in the New Testament to denote spiritual and heavenly happiness (Matt. xxv. 21; John xvii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 13). Therefore the bulk of modern interpreters have felt constrained to view this clause as descriptive, not of what Christ sacrificed in submitting to the cross, but of what He anticipated as the reward of His voluntary humiliation and endurance of a painful death. This exposition gives its full force to *χαρᾶς*, is quite consistent with the import of *προκειμένης*, and only requires that *ἀντί* be understood in a sense not so common as the other meaning already stated. Yet *ἀντί* is very similarly used in the 16th verse of this very chapter, where we are told that Esau relinquished his birthright *ἀντί βρώσεως μιᾶς* for the sake of one meal. So the meaning of the clause under consideration may be, that Christ, for the sake of the joy set before Him as the reward of His sufferings, endured the cross. And the sentiment thus expressed finds a parallel in the very passage of Phil. ii. 8 appealed to in defence of the first view; for if, on the one hand, Christ's relinquishment of heaven to come down to this world be there mentioned, equally on the other it is stated that after His death, and on account of His death, He was highly exalted, and received a name above every name. The concluding clause of the verse before us, too, confirms the interpretation we have given; for it tells us that after Christ's endurance of the cross, He took His seat at the right hand of God. Now what is this but the obtaining of the joy whose an-

ticipation led Him to encounter the cross, and so disregard all the shame connected with it? He looked forward to a reward of His sufferings, and He was not disappointed. The phrase *ὑπέμεινε σταυρὸν* is skilfully selected. It looks back to *δι' ὑπομονῆς* in the first verse. We are to run with endurance, looking to Christ who endured even the cross. And we are not to be deterred by the derision or reproaches of men; for Christ despised the shame of the cross, which was considered the most opprobrious and disgraceful death. In the room of *ἐκάθισεν*, the best editions now read *κεκάθικεν*, as supported by the weightiest authorities. And this reading, as being a perfect tense, implies that not only has Christ taken His seat at God's right hand, but that He still sits there. The aorist must be translated, He sat down; but the perfect, He has taken His seat."

W. LINDSAY, D.D., *on Hebrews.*

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CXCIV.

Subject: VISION OF GOD.

"Shall I see God."—JOB xix. 26.

The exposition of the whole chapter will be found in *Homilist*, vol. x., Editor's series, p. 204. "See God!" There is a sense in which reason and the Bible assure us God cannot be seen. He is the Unapproachable, the Invisible. There is a solemn sense in which He can be seen, and in which He must be seen sooner or later; it is the sense of *conscious contact*, His presence *realized* as the one great reality, colouring and filling up the whole horizon of the soul. We make three remarks concerning this soul vision—I. It implies the HIGHEST CAPABILITY of a moral creature. The power to see the sublime forms of the material universe, is a high endowment. The power to see truth and to look into "the reason of things," is a higher endowment far; but

the power to see God, is the grandest of all faculties. To see Him who is the cause of all phenomena, the life of all lives, the force of all forces, the spirit and beauty of all forms,—this faculty the human soul has. Depravity, alas ! has so closed it generally that there are none in their unregenerate state who see God. Jacob said, “God is in this place and I knew it not.” We offer another remark concerning this soul vision—II. It involves the SUBLIMEST PRIVILEGE of a moral creature. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” To look with pure eyes at the perfection of all beauty, how transporting ! to look with the eyes of filial love upon a Father all-loving, all-good, and glorious, this is heaven, the heaven of moral creatures. “In Thy presence is fulness of joy.” Another remark we offer concerning this soul vision is —III. It includes the INEVITABLE DESTINY of a moral creature. All souls must be brought into conscious contact with Him, sooner or later “we must all appear before His judgment seat.” Every soul must open its eye and so fasten it upon Him that He will appear everything to it, and all things else but shadows. The period of atheism, religious indifferentism, ends with our mortal life ; the vision of God makes the heaven of the blessed and the hell of the damned. “Shall I see God.” Yes, whatever else I may not see, I shall see Him. The material universe may melt away and become invisible ; but He will be, and be in conscious contact with my spirit.

“Oh the hour when this material
 Shall have vanished as a cloud,
 When across the wide ethereal
 All the invisible shall crowd.”

No. CXCv.

Subject: CHRIST TRUE.

“Master, we know that Thou art true.”—MATTHEW xxii. 16.

This is the testimony, not of friends, but of enemies ; they are the words of the Pharisees and the Herodians. But even the enemies of Christ are bound to give this testimony, “We know that Thou art true.” Whatever the theoretical beliefs or moral characters of men may be, they are bound to say, “We know Thou art true.” I. PHILOSOPHICALLY, “we know that Thou art true.” First : In all Thou sayest about *God*, “we know that Thou art true.”

Thou hast revealed Him as a Person, a Spirit, a Father, and the sole Author of the universe; and our reason binds us to accept all this. Secondly: In all Thou sayest about *the universe*, "we know Thou art true." Thou hast taught that it had a beginning, that it originated with one Being who is eternal, and that it is sustained and controlled by the same power that created it. In all Thou hast said concerning *man*, we know Thou art true. Thou hast revealed man as a spiritual, responsible, fallen, existent, who can only be restored to purity and happiness by practical faith in Thyself. And in all this our reason binds us to accept Thee as true. Philosophically we are bound to accept Thee as our Teacher. For Thou givest the rational account of things, solvest the great problems of existence. II. ETHICALLY, "we know that Thou art true." First: In all that Thou hast said concerning our duty to *God*, "we know that Thou art true." He is the greatest Being, and Thou hast commanded us to reverence Him the most; He is the kindest Being, and Thou hast commanded us to thank Him the most; He is the best Being, and Thou hast commanded us to praise Him the most. We are bound by our moral constitution to accept this the teaching of our duty to God. Secondly: In all that Thou hast said concerning our duty to *others*, "we know that Thou art true." All that Thou hast enjoined is, that we should do unto others as we would have done unto us. This we are bound to accept. We cannot by any possibility reason ourselves into a denial of this obligation. III. PERSONALLY, "we know that Thou art true." We look at Thy life, and it illustrates and confirms the doctrine Thy lips declare. After the severest scrutiny, we are bound, like Pilate, to say, We can find no fault in Thee. Thy life answers to our highest ideal of goodness. Our loftiest conceptions of virtue are embodied in Thee. Thou art the true, the beautiful, the good. "Master, we know that Thou art true."

No. CXCVI.

Subject: PRACTICAL TRUST IN CHRIST THE HIGHEST HONOUR.

"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious."—1 PETER ii. 7.

"Unto you therefore who believe is the honour." Accepting this translation of Dr. Samuel Davidson and others, we use the

words to illustrate the fact that *practical trust in Christ is the highest honour*. I. Practical trust in Christ gives man the NOBLEST CHARACTER. What is true nobility or honour? Worldly wealth and power? No; there is nothing honourable in these things. *Disinterested love* is the spring and essence of a noble character, this is the soul of the hero. Where it is not, though a man may be sage, statesman, poet, king, he is contemptible. Where it is, though a man be a pauper, he is invested with Divine dignity. How does a man get this? By practically trusting in Christ—in no other way. This was Christ: self-sacrificing love made Him Christ. This is the glory of man, the glory that is revealed *in us*. II. Practical trust in Christ gives man the HIGHEST FELLOWSHIPS. Poor fallen men, morally degraded, have their societies that they regard honourable. But into what society does practical trust in Christ introduce them? First: Into the society of *sainted sages*—the great and good men of all lands and times. Secondly: Into the society of *holy angels*—the first-born of the Eternal, fleet and fiery, mighty and majestic ministers of the Eternal. Thirdly: Into the society of the great *God Himself*. Through Christ we have free access to Him; our fellowship is indeed with the Father. III. Practical trust in Christ gives man the SUBLIMEST POSSESSIONS. Fallen men count those honourable who call large estates or mighty empires their own. But such possessions have no honour in themselves, and are transient. Practical trust in Christ puts men in possession of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away.

No. CXC VII.

Subject: THE HIGHEST SERVICE OF MAN ON EARTH.

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”—1 COR. ix. 19.

The Apostle in this chapter confirms his teaching as to not putting a stumbling-block in a brother's way (chap. viii. 13), by his own example in not using his rights as an Apostle to win men to Christ. The subject that the passage suggests is this—the *highest service of man on earth*. The services of men on earth embrace a large variety. There is the service of the agriculturist, the mechanic the mariner, the merchant, the scientist, the

legislator, the king, etc., etc. Men esteem these services as differing widely in respectability and honour; but the service referred to in the text stands infinitely above all. Four thoughts are suggested concerning this *service*. I. It is a service for the GAINING OF MEN. "That I might gain the more." The "more" what? Not the gaining the more wealth, fame, or pleasure; but the gaining of more men. Christ says, "Thou hast gained thy brother." There is a way of winning a man.* Morally man is lost; lost to himself, to the universe, to God, so far as the real purpose of his existence is concerned. He is lost in the sense in which a chronometer is lost that can no more keep time, that a harp is lost that can no more make music, that a ship is lost that can no more plough the ocean, that a human body is lost that is paralyzed. In all cases the materials are there; but they cease to fulfil the grand object and purpose of their existence. No work in the universe is higher than this—to *gain a man*, to recover him to the true spirit and mission of life. Another thought suggested is,—II. It is a service INDEPENDENT OF MEN. "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all." "Free from all men" means independent of all men. True, mean-natured, servile, flunkeyish, and sycophantish men have intruded themselves into this service, but they have no right here. They are morally disqualified for the discharge of its high functions. It is a service for independent men and for them only; men of independent convictions, independent spirit, brave heroic men, utterly regardless of the frowns or favours of society. "When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Oh, how this high service has been degraded by the crowds of craven and mercenary souls that have pushed themselves into it! I am "free from all men," says Paul. "I made *myself* servant." I was not made by human authority, I was not pushed into it by others, "I made myself." A man by God's grace must make himself for the work. No Church, no college, no bench of bishops, can make him a true servant here. Another thought suggested is,—III. It is a service for UNIVERSAL MAN. "Unto all." All men, not to any particular tribe, sect, or nation, but to all, rich and poor, high and low, cultured and rude. Every true minister feels himself to be not only the servant of his own little congregation, or of his denomination, but the

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. x., p. 109.

servant of all. He preaches universal truths, advocates universal interests, and labours evermore for the common good.

CONCLUSION.—Oh, haste the time when this, the sublimest service of mankind, shall be cleared of all mean-natured souls, all mere ecclesiastical and denominational advocates; and when none but men endowed with the grand independency of an apostle shall presume to intrude themselves into a work so Divinely great and momentous.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

“Books of Illustration” designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Ichneumon Tribe,—The Instinct and Operations of Error.

MORAL error has in it the instinct of mischief. It is bred of malice, works maliciously, and rears its progeny often on the unsuspecting and the unoffending. This is the law of its existence, and all its family follow it. In the history of its birth, its insidiousness, and its cowardice, it resembles the flies of the Ichneumon tribe. All the flies of the Ichneumon tribe are produced in the same manner, and owe their birth to the destruction of some other insect, within whose body they have been deposited, and upon whose vitals they have preyed till they came to maturity. As moral error attacks everything within its reach, so also do the flies. There is no insect whatever which they will not attack in order to leave their fatal present in its body; the caterpillar, the gnat, and even the spider, himself so formidable to others, is often made the unwilling fosterer of destructive progeny.

Subject: The Magpie,—Memory's Mode of Appropriation.

UNDERSTANDING is not essential to memory; the memory of many things not understood may be vital within us. For the fact is, that memory often grips and appropriates quite mechanically. The magpie appropriates the silver spoon, carries off the gold pencil and numbers of other articles, without knowing what they are or what to do with them, and stores them carefully away. Like the magpie the memory is a kleptomaniac. It cannot restrain itself from snatching and storing away all sorts of things. Hence the importance of keeping away from thoughts and scenes which it is undesirable for memory to accumulate. The magpie does not turn his medley of stores to much account. The memory does. It is constantly meddling with them, and they are all turned to either a good or evil purpose, and they endure for ever.

Subject: Animals and their Clothing,—The Plan on which Nature affords Assistance.

THERE are two ways in which Nature affords aid. One is by directly doing the particular thing required; the other is by giving or creating the power to perform it himself. And, as a rule, Nature refuses to do for a creature that which she has endowed him with the power to do for himself. In the arctic regions, where the cold of winter is intense, Nature has furnished most animals with an efficient protection against its influence. She has given its warm coat of fur to the bear, and has provided the whale and walrus with a stratum of blubber whose non-conducting powers enable these animals to retain their vital warmth in a medium which would seem to be inconsistent with life. All animals except man, in fact, are provided with more or less covering to enable them to resist cold; and accordingly we find that where they are naturally the inhabitants of countries exposed to considerable varieties of temperature, they appear to suffer very little inconvenience during the winter. Not so man. Unprovided with any natural

covering to shelter him from the chilling influence of a wintry atmosphere, he must have become, to a certain extent, a hibernating animal, had not his reason and his industry supplied him with clothing and fire to protect him from cold. Nature, for this purpose, was content with bestowing on him the compensating faculty of reason, leaving the rest to his own ingenuity and diligence.

Subject: The Black Panther and the Natives—Reputation without Reality.

IN Java and in some other of the great Indian islands there exists a black panther, which has gained—it is difficult to say *how*,—the reputation of extraordinary ferocity and daring. He owes his fame solely to the imagination of the natives, and differs from his congeners in no single respect but the blackish colour of his skin. A skilful naturalist, who was for some years a resident in Java, relates that while botanizing in the field and jungles early in the day, he frequently roused the black panthers in their lairs. At first he was somewhat startled by the apparition of an animal of such terrible renown; but seeing him turn tail very quickly on his approach, he soon grew reassured and troubled himself no more at these rencontres than if he had met a cat or a dog.

There are plenty of “black panther” reputations in society. In literature and art, in politics and philanthropy, it is easy to find fine specimens of men enjoying a great reputation, which they owe solely to the credulity or ignorance of those of their fellow-men who have not the seeing eye to distinguish between the real and the spurious, or the intellectual capacity to test a vulgar renown by actual facts.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

DEATH OF THE REV. CHARLES G. FINNEY.—One of the names most dear to our hearts, abiding in our memories, and reigning in our thoughts, is that of Charles G. Finney, who has left the dark and corrupt scenes of earth for the higher and purer realms of being. We read his "Lectures on Revivals" when at college, and the impressions they produced upon our young nature we shall never forget. His words came to us as a voice from eternity weighted with awful truths which evoked solemn feelings and started solemn trains of thought. He was not a "revivalist" in the modern sense, which means a mere sensationalist. He was a thinker, clear, vigorous, and profound. He was a man naturally gifted, and his whole nature was aglow with sympathy with souls and love to God.

The New York *Christian Union* says:—"The death of this eminent and beloved evangelist is an event of tender and thrilling interest, not only to the multitudes of men and women yet living who ascribe their conversion to Christ to his instrumentality, but to earnest-minded Christians of every denomination, who respected and venerated him for his work's sake. Mr. Finney was born in Warren, Conn., August 29th, 1792. Of his earlier years we are unable to speak; but it is probable that he enjoyed only those advantages of education which were common to New England boys

of that period. These advantages were so well improved, however, that he was admitted to the bar in Jefferson county, N. Y., at an early age. He began his work as an evangelist in 1824, in the interior of this State; and such was the power and earnestness with which he presented the claims of the Gospel that his labours were everywhere followed by extensive revivals of religion. Many of the most prominent Presbyterian pastors—for it was chiefly among Presbyterians that he laboured—looked with great distrust upon the "new measures"—the protracted meetings, the inquiry meetings, the anxious seats, etc.—which he introduced, and which, they feared, would result in filling the Churches with spurious converts. But the revivals increased in number and power until all Central and Western New York was moved, and converts were multiplied on every hand. Never since the days of Whitefield had the American Churches been so stirred. Mr. Nettleton's labours as an evangelist in some parts of New England had been greatly blessed; but he and his friends regarded Mr. Finney as a dangerous innovator. The controversy which sprang up under these circumstances among evangelical Christians, though natural enough in itself, was not characterized always by the best Christian spirit; and many of those who took an active part in it lived to see and ac-

knowledge the mistake they made in opposing Mr. Finney. In 1831-2, by invitation of Dr. Beecher and others of the Boston pastors, Mr. Finney went to that city, where his labours were greatly blessed. Not long afterwards, Oberlin College, a child of the revivals in which he had been so conspicuous, was founded, and in 1835 he accepted a professorship. Much of his time, however, was still spent in labours as an evangelist. He came more than once to this city, and preached to great crowds in the Broadway Tabernacle. A course of powerful Lectures on Revivals, delivered by him in that place, and reported by the late Dr. Joshua Leavitt, was published. In 1837 he became pastor of the Congregational Church in Oberlin; but even this did not withdraw him from his favourite work as an evangelist. He visited various places, and his preaching hardly ever failed of being followed by a revival. In 1848 he visited England, where he remained three years, his labours being greatly blessed. On his return he accepted the presidency of Oberlin College, a place which he held for many years, resigning at last only on account of the infirmities of age. His connection with the theological department, we believe, was terminated only by his death. He died on the 17th inst., of heart disease, at his home in Oberlin, beloved and venerated by the whole community. Mr. Finney was a Calvinist with some peculiar modifications. As a preacher he was remarkable for deep solemnity, and for the power with which he depicted the

great evil of sin and the need of a Saviour. His manner in the pulpit was grave, austere, and full of earnestness. No one could hear him and doubt his sincerity. He was a natural logician. Concede his premises, and you could not resist his argument. Though he was at times sarcastic, the solemnity of his discourses was relieved by no touch of humour. His one purpose seemed to be to make sinners feel their guilt, and to persuade them to flee from the wrath to come. His preaching often savoured more of the terrors of Sinai than of the love disclosed on Calvary. It has been happily said that he had a gift for uttering alarming truths so as to 'bring the people down upon their knees.' He generally influenced men through their fears, seldom won them by any personal attraction. His sternness made him intolerant of amusements, which he thought calculated to draw the soul away from the contemplation of Divine realities. Even the innocent game of croquet looked to him like a sin. But in spite of his limitations, he was a great and good man, and his name will long be remembered as that of a faithful, self-denying servant of Christ."

The New York *Independent*, at the close of a long sketch of the deceased, remarks:—"Intensely consecrated to the single purpose of saving men, he was yet a man of most genial nature and broad sympathies. The last years of his life have been marked by a quiet and restful cheerfulness, as he has laid aside, one after another, the responsibilities he has borne so long. The funeral was attend-

ed in the church where he had preached so many years ; and although the students were mostly absent for the summer vacation, the seats and the aisles were filled, and nearly an hour was required for the people to pass in two lines by the coffin, for the last view of the peaceful and impressive countenance."

COMFORT IN PROSPECT OF DEATH. — When a person is going into a foreign land, where he never was before, it is comfortable for him to consider, "Though I am embarking to

an unknown country, yet it is a place where I have many friends, who are already settled there, so that I shall be, in fact, at home the instant I get thither." How sweet for a dying believer to reflect that, though he is yet a stranger in the world of spirits, still the world of spirits are no strangers to him ! God, his Father, is there ; Christ, his Saviour, is there ; angels, his elect brethren, are there ; saints, who got home before him, are there ; and more will follow him every day.

SELF-SACRIFICE.—A life of sacrifice is a life of liberty, since it is a life of love, the liberty of imitating that Being who loves continually and cannot err. Self-sacrifice is among the highest requirements of the mighty taskmaster, puts us in possession of the very law of God, charges it with our everlasting weal. It is the final issue of the reverent faith which lifts a man out of himself, instils the loftiest principles, the conviction of a higher life. It imparts vitality and reality to the deep matters of the soul, faith in the divine future, faith in goodness, faith in the unseen ear, the all-pervasive presence, begets thoughts which are as portals to heaven, angels to guide and to warn. It suggests and likewise helps to realize aims which exalt a nation and an age. It confirms the virtue which outshines circumstances and defies temptation. It is associated with the poetry which floats through the universe, with the genius which allies itself with all goodness and all truth. It is indeed no other than the house of God and the very gate of heaven."—*Dr. MacCormac.*

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books ; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

YAYIN; or, THE BIBLE WINE QUESTION. By Professors WATTS WALLACE, and MURPHY, and Rev. WILLIAM WRIGHT, B.A. Belfast : William Mullan.

Whether the word "Yayin" means the unfermented or fermented juice of the grape, two things are certain, that the Bible wine had an intoxicating power, and the sooner it is voted out of society as a beverage the better. Alcohol has obtained a reigning power in this country, it governs politics, it determines elections, and creates cabinets : it is a ruthless despot, and spreads devastation through the length and breadth of our country. Sir Wilfrid Lawson said, "That the God of England is the god of bottles and battles." We honour every man who takes a stand against drunkenness, even although he makes mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture. We say this, though we are far enough from agreeing with all the arguments and methods of temperance advocates ; and though some of them at times display a spirit intolerant and anti-Christian. Whether the ordinance of the Lord's Supper can be celebrated as well with unfermented as with fermented wine, appears to us a question not worth discussion. We think bread and water would do as well. At the same time, we think true temperance would gain nothing and lose much by voting it away from the sacramental table. The authors of this pamphlet are able men, distinguished scholars, and we have no doubt eminent saints. But we think they might have devoted their great powers in a way that would render more service to truth and humanity than in the production of this work : "The letter killeth, the spirit giveth life."

ROMANISM WEIGHED IN THE BALANCE OF THE SCRIPTURES AND FATHERS, AND FOUND WANTING. By Rev. W. PRESTON, M.A. London : The Book Society, 28, Paternoster Row.

Although W. Preston and many other clergymen argue strongly and zealously against Romanism, it is certain that Romanism is making

great progress in this country, and that the Church of England is one of its effective promoters. Those best informed assure us that there is scarcely a newspaper in England which has not on its staff writers of papal sympathies and aims. The "Tichborne trial," which increasing multitudes of our fellow-countrymen are beginning to feel was grossly unfair and tyrannical, was such a revelation of papal influence in this country as may well fill us with alarm. To those who require to be informed what the spirit and aim of Romanism are, we heartily recommend this work. The author writes with intelligence, for he has mastered the subject, and with earnestness, being deeply impressed with the errors of the system against which he contends.

A POPULAR COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT. By D. D. WHEDON, D.D., Vol III. Acts to Romans. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

"The series of volumes," says the author, "on the New Testament, of which this is the third, was undertaken by the author in accordance with a resolution of the Quadrennial General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America (the highest ecclesiastical legislature of the largest religious body in that country), directing that such a series should be prepared. So far as the book of Romans is concerned, far the greater number of later commentaries have accorded with the Augustinian theology. The notes in this volume coincide, upon the points most extensively discussed, rather with the theology prevalent in the primitive age, before the influence of Augustine was felt in the Western Church. It may be called also the theology of the great majority of the orthodox Church of all the Christian ages." We called the attention of our readers to the author's Exposition of the four Gospels some time since, and heartily recommended it. This volume heightens our judgment of him as an expositor—it is a very valuable Exposition on the Acts and the Romans.

INFANT BAPTISM, AND ADMISSION TO THE CHURCH. By H. L. M. London: Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row.

This pamphlet consists of three subjects, Baptism in Relation to its Proper Meaning; Infant Baptism in Relation to Christian Education; and Infant Baptism in Relation to Personal Confession of Faith. It contains a great many sensible thoughts on these subjects.

FOOD FOR FAITH; OR, REMARKABLE ANSWERS TO PRAYER. London: Book Society, Paternoster Row

This is an interesting sketch of a pious woman.



A HOMILY

ON A

Wrong Social and Religious Idea.

"What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?"—MATT. viii. 29.

THERE are three several accounts of this singular miracle, varying in minute particulars, yet presenting substantially the same story. St. Matthew speaks of *two* afflicted men; St. Mark of *one*. A discrepancy? No. One of the men has a life history that extends beyond the healing word of Christ, and is recorded. In a crowd there may be men—and *the* man. So the narrator's eye sees the one most prominent. This man passes through a wonderful transformation. He was naked, or in rags;—he is clothed. His dwelling-place was among the tombs;—he has found a place at Jesus' feet. His strength of madness was so great that chains did not hold him;—he has come to so sweet and gracious a spirit, that he asks to follow the Lord. "In his right mind." That is emphatically a right mind that says, "Lord, I will follow Thee," etc.

But the Lord has a work for him, as for so many young

converts. Don't begin to preach just yet. A man from whom some demon of theft, or blasphemy, or intemperance has been cast out, is not quite ready for ordination. Go home, show piety there; tell your friends what great things God has done for you. It is sometimes more difficult to speak to a brother about personal religion, than to exhort a crowd—to be religious in the home sphere, than to profess religion among Christ's disciples.

I do not attempt to explain this miracle. We want more light on the whole subject of demoniacal possession, to understand what is meant by the devils leaving the bodies of men to enter into swine; but I do not see how, by less than such an overmastering power, creatures like sinners in this, that they love to have their own way, were driven on such a devil's way as this, down a steep place, to perdition.

But the demoniacal possession of men is not so extraordinary. There are respectable sins, quiet devils, that possess men, none the less deadly,—mean spirits of envy and covetousness and pride; but there are ferocious passions too. Much sin is madness—*e.g.* a brutalized man kicking his wife, clenching his huge fists at his children, boiling over with blasphemies and threats. There, altering the name, you have a Gadarene demoniac. A woman under the power of intemperance, her character dead, her influence dead, dwelling among the graves of past moralities and joys, etc.

Take two lines of thought suggested by the text.

I. A WRONG SOCIAL IDEA.

There is a feeling that finds expression in the cry of these evil spirits, echoed by the prayer of the people, asking Christ to leave them—that evil is not to be interfered with in its possession of humanity.

a. The devils acknowledge Christ. While men are saying, "Jesus, Son of Mary," "Nazarene," "Galilean,"

and a few, "Master," "Lord," these spirits confess Him Son of God. Intellectual knowledge will not save. (James ii. 19.)

b. They recognize the limit of their power. Sin is for a time. God sees in the ages to come its boundary line. Satan is to be bruised under the feet of God's saints; the devil to be cast into the lake of fire. Intimations of this there are, on the side of penal judgment, but more in the promises of grace and of our Lord's universal reign.

But in the meantime these devils seem to claim the right of possession to this man's soul. They have a lease of occupancy, which even the Lord of life is not to terminate "before the time." It was a miserable tenancy, the body of a maniac. A wretched dwelling-place, the tombs; a ghastly society, the dead! and worse, the bodies of swine. Yet does it seem as though evil spirits go out of the body to a state more miserable.

"Beyond the lowest depths, a lower deep."

But have we not here a wrong social idea, that evil is to exist unmolested anywhere even for a time?

1. Men dwell in filthy and degraded conditions. They crowd together in alleys and courts. They love the darkness rather than the light, etc.

If you seek to bring the daylight into these dark places of the earth, if you touch them towards a moral or social elevation, or enter with the strong hand of law, they perhaps meet you with a growl or a roar—"Leave us alone, what have we to do with thee?"

2. Men get their living by distilling poisons, by adulterating articles of food, to ruin men's bodies; they pen and print and publish immoral literature to the ruin of men's souls; they open haunts of evil and dig pits for the unwary. It is their living. Interfere with them, and you hear this cry, "What have we to do with thee?"

A large mass of society is indifferent to religion. Visit them, speak to them of God, of His law, His love, His claim to our worship and service, they resent your well-meant endeavours, and say, "Go to your church, keep your Sabbath; we respect your liberty, respect ours."

It is possible to adopt unwise and injudicious methods in our attempts to do good, etc.

But we cannot, must not, dare not, leave evil alone.

1. Sin in society does not leave us alone. It pollutes the atmosphere we breathe, it endangers our life and the lives of those dear to us. It mars our happiness. We must meet the mighty agencies of aggressive evil and the negations of all good that chill the air and wither the beauty of goodness, with agencies of aggressive truth, with lives of holiness and righteousness, and the sunshine of love. War for war, stroke for stroke; we have part in the incessant conflict waged in this part of God's universe; and woe to the sleeper, the recreant, the coward.

2. Every man who has influence must use it, and does in fact use it. If we know more than our fellows, we are bound to teach. If rich among the starving, we ought to feed them. If we possess the divinest truth, and others are in ignorance, "No man liveth to himself." The light must shine into the darkness; and we have positive command, and the example of our Lord. "The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil." He who came to seek and to save must meet all forms of evil, and come across the track of its violent and ferocious spirits.

Christ could not leave even devils alone. He was tender to the sinner, but inexorable in severity to the sin. His very presence was enmity to all evil. So must ours be, though our interference be an offence, and our best-meant efforts resented as an intrusion into the sphere of

that personal freedom man claims for himself. There is no liberty anywhere to be or do evil.

II. A WRONG RELIGIOUS IDEA.

That Christ comes to torment men.

Truth in the charge, as there is truth in all dangerous lies. Men do not follow a phantom far. A lie that is nothing but a lie can never live.

1. He did inflict loss on these evil spirits, He cast them out. They were having a comfortable time for devils, and He sent them into the swine.

2. The Gadarenes. They lost their property. Put the case: "Shall two maniacs, wretched, pitiable, dangerous, objects of compassion and of terror—shall two human lives be restored to society—shall one soul be reclaimed for God, or shall two thousand swine die?" The swine will have it. Their estimate of the comparative value of humanity and worldly good, is not Christ's. The Satanic spirit is devoid of love; it torments the wretched. The selfish spirit will leave them in torments; it is Satanic too.

Is this estimate confined to the era of our Lord's earthly life, and to Galilee of the Gentiles?

Do not men stand on their rights now, and save their own, by leaving men in misery, and by inflicting suffering upon their fellows.

Instance: Ruin wrought by speculation.

The widow and the orphan made houseless.

3. In *saving* the life. Take the case of young converts at the outset of the religious life; there is a giving up for Christ, a suffering the loss of many things.

The sword sent into the household in heathen lands.

4. In *sanctifying* the life, God takes away child, wife, money, health.

But I denounce as a lie in its length and breadth the assertion that our Lord came into this world to torment

men. His whole mission was one of blessing. It was love. Witness Christian experience of joy and peace in believing, glorying in the cross. Ask John, lying on Jesus' breast, whether Christ came to torment him. Ask James, dying for His sake, whether he has lost by following the Master. Find Paul, bruised by stones, cast out as dead; seek him in the innermost prison at Philippi; meet him on his way to execution, and hear him sing in exultant rapture: "I reckon that the sufferings," etc.

"I know in whom I have believed," etc.

We followers of Jesus give countenance to the impression that religion is a sad and melancholy thing, because we have too little religion.

But is the evil life so happy? Is the man who stakes all on the world without sorrow? Are there no thorns in his pillow, no withering leaves in his crown, no cares in his toils?

Young men go in for a life of pleasure. Pleasure! And they will write on it "Vanity;" and God, "Sorrow, disappointment, rottenness, death."

In conclusion:—Jesus Christ is near. Because He comes at the outset to inflict temporary loss, these people do not look at the men He saves, do not wait to hear the object of His mission, but pray Him to depart out of their coasts.

They did this in plain speech; we may do it by neglect and silent rejection. What is inattention to Christ's blessed invitation, failure to watch over and deepen religious impressions, but beseeching Him to go away?

Choose. He is near! Will you say to Him, "Come," or "Depart?"

He will echo your own words in deeper and more weighty tones—*now* and at the *Judgment*.

Norwood.

W. K. LEA.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this TEHELIM, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough HOMILETIC treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The HISTORY of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) ANNOTATIONS of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The ARGUMENT of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is among the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The HOMILETICS of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately educed, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: A Portrait of a Genuine Penitent.

“Have mercy upon me, O God,” etc.—PSALM li. 1-19.

HISTORY.—This is called a psalm of David, and there is no good reason for doubting its authorship. We do not think, with De Wette, Rosenmüller, and others, that the prayer in the 18th verse, “Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem,” etc., is sufficient to show that the author must have lived in the time of the Babylonish exile, which was ages after David’s death; and that therefore he could not have been the author. For those words might have been inserted by another hand, or might have a spiritual signification. As a whole, it has the impress of David’s genius, the aroma of his soul. The title states too the occasion of its composition “When Nathan the prophet came unto him.” Nathan came to him (2 Sam. xii. 1-13) in relation to one of David’s greatest crimes, nay, to the double crime of adultery and murder. The guilt of these tremendous crimes now stung him into moral agony. It is dedicated to the chief musician, which indicates, perhaps, that whilst it is the expression of personal emotions, it is fit for general use.

ANNOTATIONS: Ver. 1.—“Have mercy upon me, O God.” The only relief that a sin-convicted soul can hope for, is in the mercy of God. “According to Thy loving kindness.” Let Thy mercy to me be according to Thy unbounded beneficence, Thine infinite compassion. “According unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies.” A repetition of the

same idea. "*Blot out my transgressions.*" Some say the allusion here is to the erasement of a debt, others to the cleansing of a vessel, the wiping away of all stains. The subsequent verse inclines me to the latter opinion.

Ver. 2.—"*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*" "Thoroughly wash me from my iniquity and from my sin. Cleanse me. The first word in Hebrew is the infinitive or imperative of a verb meaning to increase or multiply, but often used adverbially in the sense of plentifully, abundantly. The verb in the first clause properly denotes the act of washing the garments, as distinguished from that of bathing the body. See Numbers xix. 19. The image here presented, therefore, is the same as in Jude 23, sin being represented as a stain and the grace of God as purifying water."—*Alexander.*

Ver. 3.—"*For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*" "For of my transgressions I am conscious, and my sin is ever present before me."—*Delitzsch.* How vividly Nathan brought this sin to his memory! (2 Sam. xii. 1.) So vividly that it continued before his mind and heart. His great sin seems to have been buried for some time; but at the words of Nathan it sprang from the grave of oblivion and became a terrible and ever-present reality.

Ver. 4.—"*Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.*" What does he mean? Had he not sinned both against Uriah and his wife? Yes; but the sin against them was but secondary and shadowy. All true domestic and social laws are God's laws, not man's; and therefore any transgression of them is a sin against God. "*That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.*" The meaning is, I acknowledge this, that Thou mayest be just.

Ver. 5.—"*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*" Does this mean what the old theologians call original sin? Does it mean that he was constitutionally sinful—sinful in his very nature? This, in philosophy, is nonsense; in religion, it is blasphemy. All it means is, that from the commencement of his moral history he formed a sinful character or condition of soul.

Ver. 6.—"*Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*" The idea seems to be, that whilst the principles of falsehood and depravity are deeply rooted within me, nothing but truth and purity can satisfy the Almighty. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts," etc.

Ver. 7.—"*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*" What, in botany, this hyssop is, nobody knows; nor does it matter. The idea is purification.

Ver. 8.—"*Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice.*" The "bones,"—the energies which Thou hast crushed—may be restored. A sense of guilt saps the constitution

of man and enervates his power. Such is the connection between the mind and the body, that an agonized mind can break up the physical health of the most robust organization.

Ver. 9.—“*Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.*” The meaning of this seems to be, Overlook my sins, blot them out of Thy memory.

Ver. 10.—“*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*” —

“Create in me a clean heart, Elohim,
And renew a steadfast spirit in my inward part.”
—*Delitzsch.*

A clean heart and a settled spirit, a spirit settled in truth and God, are the urgent needs of a sinner. But these must come from God. He must “create” the pure heart, He must “renew” the settled spirit of goodness.

Ver. 11.—“*Cast me not away from Thy presence.*” This means, Do not reject me, do not cast me off as worthless. “*And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.*” Do not leave me to myself. Thy Spirit is not entirely gone from me, for I feel it quickening my conscience, inspiring me to an improved life. Take not this spirit from me.

Ver. 12.—“*Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.*” His guilt had robbed him of all spiritual joy; he was cheerless and sad, full of painful memories and terrible forebodings. He prays for the restoration of the old joy. “*And uphold me with Thy free spirit.*” Thy willing spirit. Sin endangers and enslaves, hence the prayer for God to uphold and make free.

Ver. 13.—“*Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.*”—Unto Thee shall return. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways. Here begins the expression of his thankfulness, or rather a description of the way in which he is determined to express it. The word supplied at the beginning points out the connection of the verses. Then, when these petitions have been answered, I will teach. The form of the Hebrew verb denotes a strong desire and a settled purpose, as if he had said, I am resolved to teach transgressors, rebels, traitors, apostates. Thy way, as well the ways in which Thou walkest as the ways in which Thou requirest us to walk—the course of Providence and the course of duty.—*Alexander.*

Ver. 14.—“*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness.*” Bloodguiltiness—in the margin, “bloodiness.” The phrase is perhaps used to indicate the intensity of the guilt. David had caused the blood of Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba to be shed. He feels the enormity of the crime, and prays for deliverance.

Ver. 15.—“*O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.*” Guilt has closed my lips, so that I cannot celebrate Thy

praises with a joyous heart. Remove my guilt, and then my lips will open and speak out Thy praise.

Ver. 16.—“*For Thou desirest not sacrifice; Thou delightest not in burnt offering.*” By sacrifice is meant mere material oblation, apart from a true devotional spirit. Such the Almighty does not desire. “*Else would I give it.*” This phrase,—in the margin, “that I should give it,”—expresses the idea, were such an offering wished, I would give it.

Ver. 17.—“*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.*” The idea is, a truly penitential soul is a sacrifice that Thou wilt accept and not despise.

Ver. 18.—“*Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem.*” This is figurative language, and it means in general, Let Thy religion prosper.

Ver. 19.—“*Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*” The idea here seems to be, Let true religion spread amongst the people, and then ceremonial sacrifices will be acceptable to Thee.

ARGUMENT.—This psalm consists of two parts—a prayer and a vow. In the first he prays to be forgiven and restored to the Divine favour (ver. 1–12). In the second, he shows how he means to testify his gratitude (ver. 13–19).—*Alexander.*

HOMILETICS.—This psalm may be regarded as the portrait of a genuine penitent. Here a human soul, smitten with a sense of its guilt, and profoundly contrite, is laid open before us. Two general subjects are presented to our notice. First: The favours this penitent implores; and secondly, the arguments this penitent employs.

I. THE FAVOURS this penitent IMPLEORES. Deep and agonizing is his cry to Heaven, but for what? For four things,—

First: *Deliverance from sin.* “Blot out my transgressions.” “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.” SIN. What a little word, but what an enormous thing! It always implies *four* things:—the existence of law,—the means of knowing law, for where the means of knowing the law are not possessed, there can be no sin,—the power of obeying or disobeying the law, for where this power does not exist, there can be no sin,—and an actual violation of law. All these things were involved in David’s sin. In this psalm sin is presented in two aspects: (1) As an *act*, “My transgressions.” (a) As an *act entirely*

personal, “*I have done this evil.*” “Conscience,” says the immortal Robertson, “*ever speaks thus.*” It was not the guilt of them that tempted you: they have theirs; but each, as a separate agent, has his own degree of guilt. Yours is your own,—the violation of your own, and not another’s, sense of duty,—solitary, awful, unshared, adhering to you alone of all the spirits of the universe.” All your arguments for the dogma that man is the creature of circumstances—conscience, when it springs to a sense of its guilt, tears to pieces in an instant, and tramples in the dust. It says, *I have sinned.* It is my sin, not the sin of my circumstances, my organization, or my tempters. How a convicted conscience detaches man from all society, all surroundings, insulates him, and causes him to stand *alone* before the burning eye of infinite purity!

(*b*) As an act relating *directly to God*. “Against Thee only.” Before a sin-awakened conscience, God is everything. He fills the whole horizon, and beams forth, radiating with all the effulgence of His holiness. It sees God. All violations of our own constitution, all outrages on the rights of others, are sins against God. “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.”

(*c*) As an act *ever rememberable*. “My sin is ever before me.” A man’s sin may, as in the case of David, through absorbing worldly engagements and sensual indulgences, be laid in the grave of oblivion for a brief space; but when conscience is touched with a sense of its guilt, no sealed stones, no ponderous mountains will keep it there, it will spring to life, never to disappear again. “My sin is ever before me.” What a prospect! To have the eyes of conscience fastened evermore on one’s sin! What spectacle is more horrid, more ghastly, more abhorrent than this?

In this psalm sin is presented (2) As a *condition*. “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

This, as has been already asserted, does not necessarily mean original sin in the theological sense, but the generating of depravity at the commencement of our moral history. Such are the corrupting influences that surround life into which

we are born, that as soon as we begin to act as moral agents, we are turned into the wrong course—imbibe those wrong opinions and construct those unvirtuous habits that constitute the basis of a character which inclines us in after years to evil, and evil only. Had the writer meant by these words that sin was part of his conscience, wrought into the very texture of his being, he could not have done what he does here—grieve over it as a moral enormity. He means to say, I have not only committed this great crime which the prophet Nathan has brought home to my conscience, but I have been wrong from the earliest period of my moral existence. Ay, sin exists, not merely as an act, but as a condition or mood of the soul. As a condition of soul, it is like the electric element that pervades the atmosphere; as an act, it is only that electric element breaking out in thunder and flaming in lightning.

Now, deliverance from this sin is what is implored; and this deliverance is spoken of as a blotting out, a washing, a cleansing. The idea suggested is, that closely as sin may adhere to us, deeply rooted as it may be in us, though it took possession of us in our earliest childhood, it is not part of ourselves; it can be separated from us; it is not ingrained, it can be washed away. There are moral influences on this earth to cleanse souls—the influences of grace and truth, brought through Jesus Christ.

(To be continued.)

PSYCHOLOGY.—Psychology as a science is natural and demonstrable as any other, takes account of man's inner nature, the good, the beautiful, and the true. So far from self-observation being impracticable, everything even that material science by some thought alone accessible, comes to us through the medium of the inner, the unseen life. Psychology, rightly understood, resumes all other sciences, for it is the science of the living soul. It is intimately connected with religion, of which it is the sure and certain ally, and vain are the efforts which have been made, or ever shall be made, to decry it.—*Dr. MacCormac.*

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: The Transcendent Greatness of God.

"Dead things are formed from under the waters," etc.—JOB. xxvi. 5-14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—It is worthy of remark that Wemyss and others regard the whole of this chapter as a continuation of Bildad's address.

We think the reasons for such an idea are very insufficient, nor is it of any real importance, whether Bildad or Job uttered the words.

Ver. 5.—"*Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.*" The speaker, if the patriarch, here enters on a grand representation of God, probably to show that his views of the majesty of the Almighty were not inferior to those propounded by Bildad in the preceding chapter. This verse has been variously translated. "The souls of the dead tremble (the places) under the waters and their inhabitants."—*Magee*. "The place where the giant monsters of the deep are formed, that which is beneath the waters, and the inhabitants thereof."—*Bernard*. "The shades tremble from beneath, the waters and their inhabitants."—*Barnes*. The "dead things" mean the shades of the dead, or departed spirits that dwell in Sheol, the great world of disembodied spirits. This great world is represented as being under the waters. The waters meaning perhaps the subterranean abyss. Who can tell the multitudes that people this unseen world? Conquerors, tyrants, etc., are there.

Ver. 6.—"*Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.*" "Hell," Hebrew, Sheol; Greek, *ᾗδης* Hades. The idea is that the mighty world of disembodied spirits lies naked to the eye of God. "The eye of God is in every place."

- Ver. 7.—“*He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*” “He stretcheth out the north over a void. He hangeth the earth upon nothing.”—*Dr. Bernard.* Job’s idea seems to have been, that the earth hung in space, and had nothing to support it: as Milton expresses it, “The earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.” Many of the ancients had the same astronomic notion; and modern science could scarcely reject the sublime description here given.
- Ver. 8.—“*He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.*” “That is, He collecteth the waters into the clouds, as it were, in bottles or vessels which do not let them fall till He is pleased to send them drop by drop upon the earth.”—*Kitto.* “He hath bound the waters in a garment.”
- Ver. 9.—“*He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.*” A similar expression we have to this in Ps. xviii. 11: “He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.” “Clouds and darkness are round about Him,” etc.
- Ver. 10.—“*He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.*” The ancients seem to have believed that only the northern hemisphere enjoyed the light of the sun, and that all below the horizon was in perpetual darkness. They also supposed that the earth was surrounded by water, upon which the concave of heaven seemed to rest; and hence the idea of a circular bound, drawn as it were by compasses at the extreme verge of the celestial hemisphere, where the light was supposed to end and the darkness to begin.
- Ver. 11.—“*The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof.*” By the pillars of heaven he probably means the mountains. Amongst the ancients, Atlas was considered one of the pillars of heaven.
- Ver. 12.—“*He divideth the sea with His power, and by His understanding He smiteth through the proud.*” By His power He clothed the sea, and by His understanding smote He its pride.
- Ver. 13.—“*By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens.*” Whether the word Spirit here is to be taken as synonymous with wisdom or breath, it scarcely matters. In any case it means that God Himself garnished the heavens. The next clause shows this: “*His hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*” The serpent here is supposed to refer to the heavenly constellation called the dragon, a constellation that has eighty brilliant stars.
- Ver. 14.—“*Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?*” “Lo, these are but outlines of His ways, and how small a matter hath here been heard of Him.”—*Bernard.* The idea is, that what is seen of God in nature is wonderful, but what comes not within the range of human vision is unutterably great.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of these words is the *Transcendent Greatness of God* ; and there are two facts illustrative of this.

I. God appears incomprehensibly great in THAT PORTION OF THE UNIVERSE THAT IS BROUGHT UNDER HUMAN OBSERVATION.

Here He is referred to,—

First : In connection with the *world of disembodied spirits*. “Dead things are formed from under the waters and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.” This great world stands naked to His eye, He sees into the depths of every separate soul, it has no covering. Although these disembodied spirits seem to be under the waters, deep beneath unfathomable oceans, He sees them, and they tremble before Him ; “the shades tremble from beneath.” Mighty conquerors, ruthless despots, savage tyrants, that kept their generations in awe, here tremble before Him. In Homer’s *Iliad* there is a passage somewhat similar to this, but scarcely equal in sublimity. Pope’s is a pretty fair translation of it—

“ Deep in the dismal regions of the dead
Th’ infernal monarch reared his horrid head,
Leaped from his throne, lest Neptune’s arm should lay
His dark dominions open to the day,
And pour in light on Pluto’s drear abodes,
Abhorred by men and dreadful e’en to gods.”

So great is God, that all these ghastly spirits, the ruthless tyrants of past ages, tremble before Him down in abyssmal Sheol.

Here He is referred to,—

Secondly : In connection with this *terraqeous globe*. “He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” “From passages like this,” says Dr. Barnes, “occurring occasionally in the classic writers, it is evident that the true figure of the earth had early engaged the attention of men, and that occasionally the truth on this subject was before their minds, though it was neither brought into a system nor sustained there by sufficient evidence to make it an article of established belief,”

“In this couplet,” says Dr. J. M. Good, “we have one of the doctrines of the earliest Idumean or Arabian cosmology ; and which, issuing perhaps from this quarter, was propagated in every direction, and received as a popular tenet, in subsequent ages, throughout Greece and Rome. The north, or north pole, is here used synecdochically for the heavens at large ; the inhabitants of Idumea knowing nothing of the south, but believing it to be altogether uninhabited and uninhabitable ; and in the language of Ovid *ponderibus librata suis* —“self-poised and balanced.” By what means it was, in their opinion, self-poised and hung upon nothing, we find amply explained in Lucretius—

“That this mass terrene might hold unmoved
The world's mid regions; its excess of weight,
From its own centre downward, gradual ceased,
And all below a different power assumed
From earliest birth a nature more attuned
To the pure air in which it safe reposed.
Hence earth to air no burden proves, nor deep
Grinds it with pressure ; as the limbs no load
Feel to the body, to the neck no weight
Th' incumbent head, nor e'en the total form
Minutest labour to the feet below.”

This globe, with its circumference of twenty-four thousand miles and a ponderousness which baffles all human appreciation, He hangs upon nothing—nothing but His own will. The oceans of water which seem to encircle it, He bindeth up in thick clouds, and those clouds seem to conceal the effulgence of His throne. Then the waters that roll over the globe, to them He hath set a limit. To the proud billows He hath said, “Hither shalt thou come, and no farther.” Milton has indicated the limits that the Infinite has put to all things—

“Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in His hand
He took the golden compasses prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe and all created things ;
One foot He centred, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, ‘Thus far extend thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world.’

Here He is referred to,—

Thirdly : In connection with the *starry universe*. “By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens.” W. Herschell observed one hundred and sixteen thousand stars pass the feeblest telescope in one quarter of an hour. But what are they ? Only a few drops to the ocean. Who moulded and burnished those ? Who garnished those heavens ? “He,” the Almighty One.

Now, these are only “*parts of His ways* ;” These nether regions of disembodied spirits, this terraqueous globe suspended “on nothing,” those oceans of waters that roll around and over its surface, those heavens crowded with innumerable globes of fiery brilliancy—He has to do with them all. He is not like the engineer that has finished the machine and left it, or the architect that has built the edifice and left it. He is in every part of the machinery He has constructed, in every part of the great house He has built. These old Arabians were wiser, more philosophic than modern scientists. They did not ascribe the phenomena and operations of the universe, as it appeared to them, to laws which are mere abstractions of the brain, but to the force, skill, and goodness of an all-sufficient Personality. But the other fact in the passage illustrative of the greatness of God in that portion of the universe which is brought under human observation, and in which God is seen, is—

II. INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED WITH THOSE PARTS THAT ARE UNDISCOVERED IN IMMENSITY. “Lo, these are parts of His ways : but how little a portion is heard of Him ? but the thunder of His power who can understand ?” The great earth hanging on nothing, unfathomable oceans of water sailing in clouds and surging on shores, the spirit-realms of Sheol, and the myriad-starred heavens are only “parts of His ways,” mere outlines, dim sketches, tiny specimens of what lies out of sight, and where the Infinite works as He does here. Here He is only heard as a faint whisper ; away through the vast unknown He is heard in thunder. God appears infinitely great to us as He operates in the known.

But what is the known to the unknown? What is one atom to all the particles that compose the solar system?

CONCLUSION.—We may conclude with two remarks concerning God's greatness.

First : God's greatness is not inconsistent with His attention to little things. He bindeth up the waters as well as garnisheth the heavens, and controls innumerable systems. Even amongst men the ignorance or the neglect of little things is no indication of greatness. The greater the man, as a rule, the more interested in minor matters. But to the Infinite there is nothing great or small. He is not so absorbed with the immensities as to overlook the infinitesimals, not so baffled with the multiplicity of engagements as to suspend His interest in the minutest part of His universe,—

“He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall.”

Secondly : God's greatness is a vital subject for human thought. Here, as well as in numerous other parts of the Holy Book, the subject is urged on human attention. Every part of nature, and every paragraph of Holy Writ, ring this subject into the ears of men. Why this? No subject is so soul-quickenening. Thoughts on the Great Living One are life-giving. No subject is so humbling. As we think of Him, our egotism wanes away, we feel morally absorbed in the Infinite. This subject drinks up the soul.

“The more Thy glories strike my eyes,
The lower I shall lie;
Thus, while I fall, my joy shall rise
Immeasurably high.”

THE WORLD A PARADISE.—The world is yet an Eden, hues golden and purple are still seen, ravishing melodies are yet heard. All nature, indeed, is a revealing, a ceaseless declaration of the else unutterable excellences of God. And each man is an Adam, undergoing apprenticeship in the garden of life. Sin as erst is still the only fall, its destruction our paradise regained.—*Dr. MacCormac.*

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are :—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; "The Gospel History," by Lbrard ; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee ; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner ; Lange ; etc., etc.

Subject: Divine Providence.

"These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple : and no man laid hands on Him ; for His hour was not yet come."—JOHN viii. 20.

EXPOSITION : Ver. 20.—"*These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as He taught in the temple.*" Jesus is still in the temple, and continuing His discourse, notwithstanding repeated interruptions. Indeed the interruptions and the interrogations, captious as most of them were, seem to stimulate utterances of truth which otherwise, perhaps, the world would never have heard. He was in that part of the temple called the "treasury." This was the court of the women, in which there were thirteen chests into which the worshippers cast their offerings. In this court there were the great chandeliers which had been lighted at the feast, and from which Jesus had just drawn an illustration of Himself as the "light of the world." What courage Christ had, to stand in this most public place on the most public occasion, in order to utter truths that struck at once against the secular interests and religious prejudices of the people.

HOMILETICS.—The words present to us the subject of *Divine Providence*, and suggest two thoughts concerning it.

I. THAT IT EXERTS A RESTRAINING POWER ON WICKED MEN.
"No man laid hands on Him." Why ? Jewish rage was almost at its height. The Sanhedrim and many of the people were thirsting for His blood, the thirst was becoming intense. Why did they not lay hands upon Him now ? They neither lacked the disposition, the muscular power, nor the public co-operation. Why ? "His hour was not yet come." There

was a subtle mysterious power on their spirits, holding them back; there was an invisible hand restraining them. In relation to this restraining power of God's moral government of the world, three remarks may be offered.

First: It is *not always a matter of consciousness*. Sometimes, it may be, men feel that they are reined in, that there is a curb on them, some mysterious power preventing them from doing what they most fervently desire. History presents us with monsters that have felt themselves like caged lions. But as a rule the restraining force is so subtle, so delicate, that men are unconscious of it.

Secondly: It *interferes not with human freedom*. A man is not free from the guilt of a wrong act because he has not the power or the opportunity to embody it. The guilt is in the desire, the volition. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." At first sight it seems morally absurd that God should restrain a man from committing a crime, and yet hold him guilty for it. The solution is here: The crime is in the wish.

Thirdly: It is an *incalculable advantage to the race*. What was in the Alexanders, the Caligulas, the Napoleons, the Lauds, and the Bonners, is for the most part in every unregenerate soul. Were there no restraining hand upon depraved hearts, all social decency, order, peace, and enjoyment would be at an end. The world would be a Pandemonium. We rejoice that He who reigns in the ocean and keeps it within bounds, holds in the passions and impulses of the depraved soul. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters: He turneth it whithersoever He will."

Another thought concerning Divine Providence suggested is:—

II. THAT IT HAS SETTLED PERIODS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EVENTS. "For His hour was not yet come." Christ seemed practically to recognize the fact that there was a particular hour or crisis for everything He had to do. There was an hour for the commencement of His miracles, an hour for

His baptism, an hour for His death. His death was the hour of hours. "Father, the hour has come." God has appointed scenes in space and appointed seasons in duration for all things that occur in His vast dominion. Nothing He allows to be done in one scene that is intended to occur in another, nothing in one season that is fixed for another. There is a season for everything. "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven." Every orb that rolls through immensity has a point it is bound to reach, and a certain fixed period and "hour;" it is never behind its time. So it is not only in the epochs and eras of human history, but in all the events of individual life. "Man's decrees and purposes," says a modern author, "often fail from the fickleness of his own mind, from his want of foresight, and from his want of power. When the period contemplated for carrying them into effect arrives, he has already, perhaps, laid them altogether aside; or, if they are still entertained, he finds, it may be, the circumstances unfavourable to the carrying out of his design. It is altogether otherwise with the designs of the Almighty. When His set time for working comes, not all the power in the universe can stay His hand. When we first look abroad, indeed, upon the busy field of human affairs, and observe the numerous actors upon the scene, all moving energetically to and fro, planning, arranging, adjusting the course of things, we may be tempted for the moment to imagine that destiny itself is in their hands. But when we have looked a little longer and have seen all their schemes deranged, and all their contrivances thwarted, and all their devices turned to foolishness, and a result emerging the very opposite, it may be, of what they had been labouring to produce, we begin to discover that there is a power out of sight mightier than all—One whose purposes are from everlasting to everlasting, whose counsel shall stand, and who will do all His pleasure."

Germ of Thought.

Subject: Telegraph between Earth and Heaven.

“Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee,
Here we are?”—JOB xxxviii. 35.

LIGHTNING is not a thing of yesterday, then. It rode the crest of the clouds and flung its coruscations through the fields of immensity thirty-four hundred years ago, as fraught with energy and death as it is to-day. Possibly Job had seen the massive trees on the hills of Arabia dashed to splinters by the lightning, or human beings killed by its stroke. Whether he knew the philosophy of lightning, or the facts of science as taught in modern times; or whether, when he spoke of “sending lightning,” he only uttered what he saw would be done in the future, we of course do not know. No thoughtful reader, however, can fail to see that many of his observations on the phenomena and laws of nature are singularly appropriate, and confirmed by the facts of science up to the present hour. Nature’s great laws and forces are the steeds of the Almighty. Many of them are indeed wild and fiery; but none of them are too much so to be haltered in and harnessed by man, and made to carry him forward in the road of progress. Through the agency of steam and electricity our commercial and social world has been completely revolutionized during the last fifty years. Since the days of Franklin, what wonderful progress has been made in the study of electricity; and how it has been utilized for the benefit of man! What marvels it has wrought in annihilating time and space! It has converted the world into a mere whispering gallery, flung around it a net-work of wire; and the lightning goes careering over States, over rivers, under oceans, and over continents, so that ere the voice in which it was spoken has died away, the word is written on the other side of the globe. Distant nations are thus brought within speaking distance of each other. Great Britain and the United States,

—the two greatest nations on the globe, the great radiating centres of civilization, commerce, and religion,—can now send lightning and bid each other, Good morning and God speed, in spite of the mighty Atlantic that rolls between them.

This perfect medium of communication between nations I shall use to illustrate the more perfect medium of communication between heaven and earth ; a medium wrought out and perfected through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

In Eden man had no need to send despatches or make his requests known to a distant God. God was then present, and in the cool of the day walked among the trees of the garden, in personal and loving converse with man. But the terrible catastrophe of the fall broke the bond of nearness and harmony between them. Man's spiritual gravity was somehow shifted, and turned the other way ; and some dread, unknown, infernal centre drew him down, and away from God. God was no longer a magnet to attract, but a being to repel. Continents of moral space lay between them ; without any power or desire in man to return, and, as yet, no medium of recovery announced. But God did not long allow this starless night of desolation to cover His fallen creature. A medium of communication was announced in the "seed of the woman ;" Immediately, therefore, and as the condition of their approach to God, the blood of Calvary began to be typically poured forth, and flaming altars rolled their incense to the skies. "And Abel, he brought the firstlings of his flock." On downwards through the Patriarchal Dispensation, we find men held intercourse with God through the blood of Atonement, typically shed in their sacrifices. The Economy of Moses was afterwards established, when men held intercourse with God through the medium of Divinely appointed priests, who "offered gifts and sacrifices for the sins of the people." Like post-masters, they stamped the offerings of the people and presented them before God. But this method was indirect and tedious, involving considerable time and expense in the operation. It was something like the old method of carrying the mail by hand or on horseback, as compared with

our lightning express trains and telegraphic communications. It also gave scope for the selfish part of our nature to operate, for it was very expensive. The tenth of all they raised had to be given, and the firstlings of their flocks had to be turned out, in order to hold intercourse with God. Many of our tight-fisted professors to-day would soon lose the spirit of devotion, I fear (if they ever had it), if God demanded a bullock or a ram as the condition of their approach to Him. They would shorten their correspondence to the elliptical brevity of a telegram, and never ask a reply, if the firstlings of their flocks had to be given to pay for the despatch. "In the fulness of time," therefore, Jesus Christ came to open up a new and living way to the Father. As the great antitype of priest, and altar, and sacrifice, He did away with them all, by offering one Sacrifice for sin, of infinite merit and eternal duration. He laid this medium of communication single-handed and alone, in the midst of the most terrible discouragement and opposition. The last span of the mighty cable was laid in the agony of death, as He meekly "cried, IT IS FINISHED, and yielded up the ghost." The invitation now is, "Come, for all things are ready," "without money and without price," "with prayer and supplication make your requests known unto God."

This line was not in thorough working order until the day of Pentecost, when the Divine electricity came down as a mighty rushing wind, and sat as cloven tongues of fire upon the heads of the Disciples. As Peter stood up to deliver his message to the people, the shocks from this Divine battery passed through him and penetrated the multitude, moving them to reformation and penitence, when three thousand messages,—and I don't know how many more,—were sent along this "new and living way," every one of which received a direct answer from God. Ever since it was first laid, the cat-fish and the porpoises of scepticism, and the polly-wogs and minnies of infidelity have been pushing and nibbling at it; but their little harmless efforts, together with the friction of the mighty billows, have only given it a lustre and a

brightness, which nothing else could have imparted to it. And now, after nearly 1900 years of trial, it abides as strong and as serviceable as ever—the joy of the present and the hope of the future. Voltaire boasted that he would sweep it to destruction ; but he was swept to that region himself some time before he completed his job. Many caught up the broom of his logic, as it fell from his palsied hands, and have continued the sweeping. The dust they have raised has bewildered and blinded many ; but the grand old line still remains unbroken and unmarred. Every man must be his own operator. No man need send his despatches to the office of the Virgin Mary, begging her to forward them, with a word of intercession at the bottom. It is the most perfect and wonderful phenomenon in the moral universe. In sending a message by telegraph to a distant point, the operator must call to that office, to see if that operator is there and ready to receive it. The most urgent message I ever wished to send by telegraph, was never sent, because we could get no answer from the office where I wished to send it. The operator called and called, but no reply. There are no such delays and disappointments in connection with this telegraph between earth and heaven. Listen to what God says about it. “ And it shall come to pass in that day, before they call I will answer.” That is, while they are about to call, and see if the way is clear, “ I will save them the trouble, and say, *Send on your despatches, behold, all things are ready.*” “ And while they are yet speaking I will hear.” That is, before their prayer is half uttered, I will get the drift of the whole message ; and while they are yet speaking the answer shall arrive. Glory be to God, some of us know a little about this quick business. Brethren, this explains how it is that we have been so often filled with the Holy Ghost power before we had *well* commenced to pray, when joy has broken through our swimming eyes, and meant the thanks we could not speak.

Oh, may we all be rich in heavenly intelligence and grace this morning ! Let every soul be open to receive the currents

of Divine influence that are moving amongst us, this hour. Let every heart communicate with God. Ask for the descent of the old-fashioned primitive power, which made our fathers so potent in His hand.

T. KELLY, M.A.

U. S. of America.

Subject: "Tongues in Trees."

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree :

He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."—PSALM xcii. 12.

THOROUGHLY to understand the sacred Scriptures, and to extract from them much of the beauty and instruction they are competent to convey, we must study them not only by the ordinary canons of Biblical interpretation, but we must sometimes have recourse to *external* and *collateral* aid. Some parts of the Bible are so self-evident, that he who runs may read ; other parts are so deep and mysterious, that diligent study is required in order that the meaning may be discovered. The words now under our consideration can only be understood by frequent allusions to the natural history of the palm and cedar ; for the text is like a finger-post, pointing to those two beautiful and suggestive objects in the world of nature. The word "*like*" institutes an analogy between the growth of the righteous and that of the noble and stately trees indicated. Allusions to objects in nature enter into the woof and warp of the texture of Holy Writ, and they are as windows letting in side-light to aid us in understanding the mind and will of God, and our duty and relationship to Him. There are

"Sermons in stones ; tongues in trees ;

Books in running brooks ; and good in everything."

Let us trace the beautiful train of thought here opened up before us by the Royal Psalmist, and learn how the righteous grow in grace, and how they flourish and ripen for celestial glory.

I. *The palm-tree and the cedar grow in apparently uncongenial soil.* In the East the palm does not grow in the fertile loam, but in the arid sand, where there appears to be no moisture

to sustain it, and where the scorching sun seems almost certain to destroy it ; and *the cedar* of Lebanon grows, not in the fertile, sheltered valley, where the streamlets play and the silvery rivers glide, but on the rocky heights of the mountains, out from the fissures of the rocks, where all seems cold, and sterile, and unkindly ; there in that uncongenial soil, cradled and rocked by storms and snows, the stately cedar grows. And *the righteous* in this world grow and flourish in apparently uncongenial soil. This world,—I know,—in itself is beautiful, and full of voices speaking to us of its great Creator ; and it teems with monuments of the presence and power and Providence of God. The world itself is right ; but *sin* is here, and Satan tempts us to pervert and prostitute the pleasures, purposes, and pursuits of life, and employs the things of the world as baits to lure us into sin, as he did in his temptation of our Lord and Master in the wilderness. The *trials* and *temptations* which come to us in connection with our pilgrimage and probation in the world, weary and worry us, and render it *apparently* a very uncongenial place for righteousness to flourish in. To the Christly soul earth often seems like a desert ; and the world, hard and cold and rugged as the mountains of Lebanon. And yet the righteous grow ; and from the analogy presented in our text, we can learn the reasons how and why.

II. *The palm-tree and cedar grow because they are fed by hidden resources. The palm in the desert is fed by hidden springs* that flow beneath the surface of the dry sand ; its roots drink deep and are sustained, and they send up the moisture into the leaves and branches, and they are refreshed and invigorated. *The roots of the cedar are fed by the streams that come trickling down from the snow-crowned tops of Lebanon ;* they go far and wide into the fissures of the rocks, securing stability by their sturdy grasp, and continuing strong by drinking of the perpetual supply that comes down from the melting snows. So the righteous in this world grow and flourish. *Like the palm*, they are fed by *hidden resources* : with joy they draw water out of the wells of salvation, and Jesus

declared that men thirsting for salvation were to come unto Him and drink, and that the water He would give them should be *in* them a well of water *springing up* unto everlasting life. *Like the cedar*, the righteous grow, for they are fed by *hidden resources* which come from *above*; the water of life flows down from the river of life that flows by the throne of God. One of the scenes in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" (the house of the Interpreter) will illustrate this. The fire burning against the wall could not be extinguished by the water that was being thrown upon it, because there was a shining one behind, pouring in oil and feeding it, and thus it was secretly sustained. So is it with the Divine life in the heart of man, it must be fed by *hidden springs within and above*; and in proportion to the supply we obtain shall we flourish and grow. How important, then, that the righteous should avail themselves of all those means of grace, which will be as *channels* through which God has promised to convey the supply necessary to the progress of the soul in holiness. All our springs are in God, and the streams of Divine supply flow in the sanctuary; hence, "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God."

II. *The palm-tree and cedar, fed by hidden resources, grow into things of beauty and utility.* The palm is (a) *Erect*. It is not like the bush, or bramble, or nettle, growing near to the earth and seeming to cling to it; the palm rises from the earth, and, while *in* it, seems not to be *of* it; for, towering aloft towards the sky, the palm grows and throws out its feathery branches and graceful leaves, to be seen and admired afar off; so the righteous grow—they are *in* the world, but not *of* it, they are *upright*, growing erectly, not clinging to the earth, or creeping, or crawling upon it; they aspire after heaven and God, and their constant ambition is—

"Nearer, my God, to Thee, nearer to Thee."

Not like the man with the mud-rake in Bunyan's Pilgrim, but like the true-born of heaven passing through life, with their foreheads fronting the temple of the sky. The attitude of the righteous is upward—in *prayer, faith, aim, hope*. The

palm is (β) *Evergreen*. While most trees in the autumn put on their Joseph's coat of many colours, and shed their foliage to the ground, the palm is evergreen, remains the same through all the circling year; so the righteous are to be *unfading* and *undying* in their profession and practice of holiness; their piety is to be so constant that the heat of summer shall not make it languish; so ardent, that the cold of winter shall not make it freeze. The cedar is also *erect*, *stately*, and *evergreen*, and gives us the ideas of STABILITY and STRENGTH and STATELINESS. The cedar stands the cold and storm, and endures—is *beautiful* and *fragrant*; and the life of the righteous is to be *strong*, *stately*, and *steady*, and *fragrant* to the praise of the glory of God; the storms of life are only to make it root the deeper, and add to its beauty and volume and power. The palm and cedar are not only beautiful, but they are eminently *useful*. The palm is useful (α) for its fruit. Gibbon says that the natives of Syria speak of 360 uses to which the palm may be applied. How glad the hungry and thirsty travellers are when they come to a cluster of palms! for they know they will find food to revive and cheer them there. The palm is useful (β) for its shade. The weary, wayworn traveller rejoices, not only in its fruit, but in the shade and shelter which its spreading leaves afford; and there he reclines and reposes his weary limbs, and resumes his journey with renewed vigour. The palm is useful (γ) as an *emblem of victory*. Under the Old Testament dispensation palm leaves and branches were regarded as fitting emblems of victory; and in all the triumphs and rejoicings of Israel they were waved by the people with shouts and gladness. Palm branches were strewn in the way as Jesus rode in triumph to Jerusalem; and the white-robed throng in heaven is represented to us as having palm branches in their hands—emblems of victory and joy. In all these particulars the righteous are as the palm-tree, for they *yield the fruit* of the *lip* and of the *life* to the praise and the glory of God; and their lives are not only happy and holy, but exceedingly *useful* to their fellow men. They live, not for themselves, but for others, and en-

deavour to leave the world better than they found it. They also *afford grateful shelter and shade* to the weary and heavy-laden ones ; they, in the name of their great Master, spread forth their arms, and invite the world to His embrace, and reiterate His cry, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." They are not like nettles and brambles, to *prick* and *sting* all who come in contact with them, but like palms, to succour and shelter the weary and the sad. The righteous are as palm-trees, the *emblems of victory* ; they have been victorious over the difficulties that beset their pathway and opposed them in their coming to Christ—they have overcome *Satan*, and they are overcoming the *world*, and they are to conquer even *death* itself, the last enemy ; and they are to come off in the end *more than conquerors* through Him who hath loved them. Much that we have said about the palm will apply with equal force and aptness to the *cedar*, for it is *towering* and *wide-spreading* and *evergreen*, exceedingly *noble* and very *useful* ; and there is *this* additional about the cedar—its wood was exceedingly useful for *sacred purposes*, being used in the building of places dedicated to the worship of the most High. So the righteous—they grow *stately* like cedars, and when cut down by the hand of death, they are removed to the new Jerusalem, and form part of the Church triumphant in the skies. What a picture of the righteous ! How far short many of us fall of its requirements ! Let us aim to come up to the standard required for God's *sanctuary* and *service*.

"Lord, 'tis a pleasant thing to stand
In gardens planted by Thy hand ;
Let me within Thy courts be seen,
Like a young cedar, fresh and green."

CONCLUSION.—We are reminded of the *contrast* between the righteous and the wicked. The righteous are as the *palm* and *cedar*, as trees planted by rivers of water ; but the ungodly are not so, but are like the *chaff* which the wind driveth away ; they are like *grass* and *stubble*, unstable and unenduring. The wicked shall not grow, but *decay* ; they shall

not flourish, but *wither*. Faith unites the soul to the Lord our Righteousness, then, by constant *trust*, *penitence*, and *prayer*, we grow and flourish in Him, till we become transplanted into the paradise above.

F. W. BROWN.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

SKETCHES FROM GENESIS.

No. 32.

Subject: JOSEPH'S PROMOTION IN EGYPT.

"And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?—GEN. xli. 37-45.

These words reveal what took place after the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams by Joseph; the interpreter was exalted to the highest position, next to the king, in Egypt. We offer the following remarks on this promotion of the prisoner.

I. It was unexpected.

Doubtless Joseph had been expecting his release from prison for a long time; ever since the departure of the chief butler, he had been looking for his freedom. The butler, however, had forgotten his benefactor for two long years, and Joseph was left groaning in prison. How often men in prosperity for-

get those who had been kind to them in their adversity and distress! Now Joseph is called to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, he knew that God would enable him to give the right interpretation, and thought probably that this would be the means of his obtaining the liberty he so much desired, especially as his imprisonment was not the result of crime. The thought of being next to the king in authority and dominion throughout the land of Egypt never entered his mind; however, this was God's plan, and the promotion to Joseph was quite unexpected. Many of the most important events in our history come to meet us suddenly. To the humble-minded all true exaltations are matters of surprise, rather than the realization of a long-cherished desire. When the Spirit of God enters the heart, and gives a title to the highest honour, the noblest service and the purest enjoyment, it is unex-

pectedly. "The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation."

II. A promotion which did not destroy the man.

The change was sudden and great from the prison to the palace, but it did not destroy the manhood of Joseph; he remains the same kind loving person; the circumstances of life could not affect his true nobility of heart. Some men are so weak and small that the least amount of prosperity seems to destroy the little good that was in them. It is one of the greatest blessings to society that some persons are kept in poverty. If providence smiled upon them they would become a curse to the neighbourhood in which they reside. Sudden wealth, unexpected honour, and authority have been too much for some to bear, they became "exalted above measure." Joseph remains the same humble, self-denying man he was before this honour was conferred upon him. Only *true men* can bear the sudden changes and revolutions of time, others bend like a reed. The true can use without misusing the wealth and renown of this world, whilst its poverty and shame cannot shake their confidence in the wise and kind Ruler of the universe.

III. A promotion for which he had been trained.

The past life of this young

man had been somewhat rough and stormy; however, the adversities of life did not shake his confidence in God, but every wave seemed to toss him nearer to his heavenly Father. In the school of adversity he had been taught the need of sympathy, so that he would be the more able to sympathize with the poor and famine-stricken during the coming scarcity. There are various forms in the school of life; some of us have to remain longer than others in the lower before we are removed to the higher form. The Great Master knows the best means to be employed; and sometimes we have to suffer adversity and affliction to prepare us to enjoy the higher walks of life. The prison sometimes comes before the mansion, and much tribulation before the Father's house with its many dwelling-places.

IV. A promotion highly beneficial to others.

All the people in Egypt were to reap the benefit of Joseph's position and power. If any of them envied him, and questioned whether the dignity conferred upon him was too great for the service he rendered, they would be convinced during the famine that he was the right man in the right place; and the family in Canaan, the covenanted people, could derive great advantage from it also.

As members of society, we cannot live to ourselves: our prosperity or adversity affects others; and the higher we ascend the more we ought to think of the welfare of others. When God exalts men spiritually, it is not merely for their own comfort and ease, but that they may be the means of keeping others alive, by pointing them to the Bread which came down from heaven.

CYMRO.

Guernsey.

Subject: UNCONDITIONAL
TRUST IN GOD.

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."—JOB xiii. 15.

The measure of our *being* is the measure of our strength. He only is strong who is "strong in the Lord." He only who is strong in the Lord rises superior to circumstances. Hence,—

Neither sickness of body nor disaster to property affect a Christ-like manhood.

Neither worldly splendour nor the state of our bodily health affords any criterion to the state of the soul. There is wealth *minus* wealth, and poverty *minus* poverty. At the time Job uttered the words of the text, he was a rich poor man. His was soul wealth, and that is the sole wealth of mortals. In that he had been, was, and should be rich. The words of the

text, then, are Autobiographical, Educational, Prophe- tical.

Assuming that these words were the reflex of Job's *being*, we notice,—

I. These words are AUTO- BIOGRAPHICAL.

Not only do they afford insight into the then state of Job's heart, but they tell us what he had been. Notice, trials not only show character, but reveal history. (1) The racehorse which is first at the goal, when fair play has had scope, shows at once its good constitution and its superior training. (2) The schoolboy who is first on examination day, manifests not only retentiveness of memory, but past diligence. (3) The victorious general argues the well-drilled soldier.

Learn: (*a*) Character, whether good or bad, is not formed by one spasmodic effort. Hence (*b*) "Rising with the occasion" is a solecism. (*c*) In order to our being strong in adversity, we should now give ourselves to Christ.

II. These words are EDU- CATIONAL.

They teach us, (*a*) That the child of God lives by faith, not sight. (1) The property of Job was gone. (2) The patience, if not the affection of his wife was exhausted. (3) His "comforters" were in reality his tormentors. Yet he trusted in

God (Hab. iii. 17, 18). (b) The child of God does not regard his relation to God as merely commercial. (1) He lives in the region of privilege, not in that of duty only. (2) A servant looks for *pay*, a son is satisfied with love. (3) He who has God, has enough, for he has all. (c) The child of God bases his trust upon the last contingency. "Slay me," says Job, yet "I'll trust." Some men can trust only so far. Like a barge, a waggon, or a crane, they can bear only a certain weight.

III. These words are PROPHETICAL.

(a) With respect to this life. What a man is at any given time, is an index to what he will be. No doubt a bad man may be changed, and a good one may alter. Still our daily procedure goes upon the principle that a man's present character indicates his future. Hence, (1) We train children aright that they may be respectable men and women, not less than respectable children. (2) We engage servants and assistants for what they are, as indicative, not only of what they have been, but of what they will be. So, (3) Given the knowledge whether we be in Christ, we may know what we shall be in the future—in kind, though not in degree. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," in amount either of blessed-

ness or misery. (b) With respect to a future life. "Slay me, yet will I trust." The child of God has a sure hope. Learn, (1) Trust in God fits for life here and hereafter. (2) The urgent necessity of determining whose we are. (3) The God of Job is our helper.

J. S. SWAN.

Subject : COVETOUSNESS.

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—HEB. xiii. 5, 6.

The subject of these words is *covetousness*, which means an inordinate desire for gain.

I. Covetousness in life SHOULD BE AVOIDED. "Conversation" stands for the whole of a man's life. It means the manner of life; every part of life should be free from covetousness. Covetousness, as a principle in human conduct, is,—

First: *Unnatural*. The soul was made to be inspired and ruled by the opposite principle—benevolence.

Secondly: *Immoral*. It is directly contrary to the character of God and the genius of the universe.

Thirdly: *Pernicious*. It injures every faculty of the mind. It is a blight upon the soul.

II. Covetousness in life INTERFERES WITH CONTENTMENT. "Be content with such things as ye have." It makes the soul restless and dissatisfied. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase." A covetous man has a gnawing hunger that nothing can satisfy. It is always crying for more. It is in the heart like the tide in the sea, allowing no rest. Sir Thomas Browne has quaintly but well described it. "Trust not to the omnipotency of gold, and say not unto it, Thou art my confidence. Kiss not thy hand to that terrestrial sun, nor bore thy ear unto its servitude. A slave unto Mammon makes no servant unto God. Covetousness cracks the sinews of faith; numbs the apprehension of anything above sense; and, only affected with the certainty of things present, makes a peradventure of things to come; lives but unto one world, nor hopes but fears another; makes their own death sweet unto others, bitter unto themselves; brings formal sadness, scenical mourning, and no wet eyes at the grave."

III. Covetousness in life is INCONSISTENT WITH CONFIDENCE IN GOD. "For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." So that we may boldly say, [so that with good courage we say] The Lord is

my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The implication is, that the existence of covetousness implies lack of confidence in God as the ever-present Friend and Helper of man. Unbounded confidence in God is the essence of piety and the condition of well-being. But where covetousness exists such trust is impossible.

CONCLUSION: Beware of covetousness, then! It is essentially incompatible with the soul's well-being.

Hippocrates, in his epistle to Cratera, an herbalist, gives him this good counsel, that, if it were possible, amongst other herbs he should cut up that weed covetousness by the roots, that there be no remainder left; "and then know this for a certainty, that together with their bodies thou mayest quickly cure all the diseases of their minds." For it is indeed the pattern, image, epitome, of all melancholy, the fountain of many miseries, much discontented care and woe; this inordinate or immoderate desire of gain to get or keep money, as Bonaventure defines it; or, as Austin describes it, a madness of the soul; Gregory, a torture; Chrysostom, an insatiable drunkenness; Cyprian, blindness, *speciosum supplicium*, a plague subverting kingdoms, families, an incurable disease; Budæus, an ill habit yielding to no remedies, neither Es-

culapius nor Plutus can cure them; a continual plague, says Solomon, and vexation of spirit. Another hell.

— *used*

**Subject: PERSONAL CHRISTLI-
LINESS.**

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."—1 PET. iv. 10.

The Apostle is urging in the context the duty of *social benevolence*. "Above all things," he says, "have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

First: Whatever man has, is a *gift* from God. Physical health, social position, worldly wealth, influence, even existence itself, he has as the free gift of God.

Secondly: Whatever man has, he should benevolently employ for the advantage of *others*. He should not live to himself. Like the clouds, the planets, in fact all nature, what he has received he should distribute. Monopoly is a sin against the constitution of things. A miser is a monster in the moral universe.

But we shall regard "the gift" referred to in the text as representing personal religion, or, what is more intelligible, personal *Christliness*. This is a gift not only which makes all other gifts valuable,

but which qualifies and disposes the possessor to use all other gifts rightly. Two remarks are suggested.

I. Personal Christliness is a DIVINE "GIFT." God's gifts to men may be divided into two classes.

(1) Those which He imparts *irrespective* of human choice or effort. Such are light, air, the common elements of life, and existence itself. Man comes into existence, the sun visits him, the heavenly orbs beam over him, and waves of air fan his lungs, without any choice or effort of his own.

(2) Those which He imparts *conditional* on human choice and effort. Such are the crops of the farmer, the mental discipline of the student, the knowledge of the intelligent, the discoveries of the inquirer, etc. In this class of gifts we put personal Christliness. It does not come to a man irrespective of his choice and effort—it requires both. In relation to this gift we offer the following remarks.

First: It is the *greatest* gift. It is, as we have intimated, the gift that gives value to all other gifts. Without this, all other gifts, even existence itself, will become an intolerable curse. This qualifies man to please his Maker, bless humanity, serve the universe, and inherit all things. "All things are yours," etc.

Secondly: It is the *costliest*

gift. When God created the universe, there seems to have been no effort on His part, it was with the greatest ease. "He spake, and it was done." But when He had to restore men, to make them Christlike and thus spiritually save them, most earnest effort on His part is implied. He had to "bow the heavens and come down," to assume human nature, etc.

Another remark suggested is,—

II. Personal Christliness is a Divine gift to be SOCIALLY EMPLOYED. "Even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Men are made good that they may do good.

First: This social ministry is *obligatory*. "As good stewards." Of all that a man has he is not the proprietor, but the trustee. Existence itself is a talent. So is especially this Christliness, this religion. It is not given for mere private use. We are responsible for it. It makes us moral debtors to all men.

Secondly: This social ministry is *varied*. "Manifold grace." The Christly man can minister good in many forms and many ways. If he has wealth, by relieving the physical necessities of men; if he has knowledge, by removing human ignorance.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God, is to visit the widow," etc. Thus, in many ways, social good may be ministered by a Christly soul. Ministered, not ostentatiously, but humbly; not niggardly, but generously; not with the lip merely, but with the life. The Christly man is the most effective and the most valuable social servant, the greatest minister of state.

Thirdly: This social ministry is *Divine*. "Manifold grace of God." All the manifold things we have are from God, His gifts of free grace. We give *gifts* to men, not personal and independent properties.

CONCLUSION: Learn from this,—

First: The *divinity* of a Christly life. It is the greatest gift of God. What are the highest gifts of mind—reason, imagination, genius, to this? Contemptible in its presence, utterly worthless in its absence. The only truly great man on earth is the Christly man.

Secondly: The *test* of a Christly life. What is the test? Reading Scriptures, singing psalms, church going? No: genuine social benevolence. Every man who has received this true gift does "minister the same one to another."

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word; selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Micah calls himself a Morasthite, because he was a native of Morshethgath, a small town of Judea. He prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, and his prophetic mission commenced soon after that of Isaiah. He was contemporary with him as well as with Hosea and Amos. His prophecies were directed to Samaria, the capital city of Israel, also to Jerusalem. Hence we find denunciations against Samaria mingled with prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. One of his predictions, it seems, saved the life of Jeremiah, who would have been put to death for foretelling the destruction of the Temple, had not Micah foretold the same thing one hundred years before.

The book is commonly distributed into three sections: chaps. i. and ii., chaps. iii. to v., chaps. vi. and vii. Each of these opens with a summons to hear God's message, and then proceeds with expostulations and threatenings, which are succeeded by glorious promises.

His style is bold, fiery, and abrupt, and has not a little of the poetic grandeur of Isaiah. His sudden transitions from one subject to another often make his writings difficult to decipher.

MICAH.

No. CXIX.

Subject: DIVINE REVELATION.

"The word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem. Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord God be witness against you, the Lord from His holy temple."—MICAH i. 1, 2.

"It is not," says Delitzsch, "a little remarkable that Micah should adopt as the first sentence of his prophecy that with which his namesake concluded his denouncement against Ahab" 1 Kings xxii. 28. Hengstenberg is of opinion that "he quoted the words designedly, in

order to show that his prophetic agency was to be considered as a confirmation of that of his predecessor, who was so zealous for God, and that he had more in common with him than the bare name."

We may take these words as suggesting certain thoughts concerning *Divine revelation*, or the Bible.

I. It is the "WORD OF THE LORD." What is a word?

First: A mind *manifesting* power. In his word a true man manifests himself, his thought, feeling, character; and his word is important according to the measure of his faculties, experiences, attainments. Divine revelation manifests the mind of God, especially the moral characteristics of that mind—

His rectitude, holiness, mercy, etc. A word is,—

Secondly: A mind *influencing* power. Man uses his word to influence other minds, to bring other minds into sympathy with his own. Thus God uses His word. He uses it to correct human errors, dispel human ignorance, remove human perversities, and turn human thought and sympathy into a course harmonious with His own mind.

II. It is "the word of the Lord" MADE TO INDIVIDUAL MEN. It "came to Micah the Morasthite." It did not come to all men of his age and country in common. It came to him and a few more. Why certain men were chosen as the special recipients of God's word, is a problem whose solution must be left for eternity. If it be said, The men to whom God made special communications were men whose mental faculties, moral genius, and habits specially qualified them to become recipients, and if all men had the same qualifications, all would have Divine communications, the difficulty is not removed by this; for it might still be asked, Why have not all men such qualifications? The fact remains, that "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

III. It is "the word of the Lord" made to individual men FOR ALL MANKIND. "Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is!" God did not speak to any individual man specially that the communication might be kept to himself, but that he might communicate it to others. He makes one man the special recipient of

truth, that he may become the organ and promoter of it. God's word is for the world, and the man who has it should give it. God enlightens, renovates, and saves man by man.

No. CXX.

Subject: GOD'S PROCEDURE IN
RELATION TO SIN.

"For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place. For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel, What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem? Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof. And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate: for she gathered it of the hire of an harlot, and they shall return to the hire of an harlot."—MICAH i, 3-7.

This is a highly figurative and sublime representation of the Almighty in His retributive work, especially in relation to Samaria and Jerusalem. He is represented as leaving His holy temple, coming out of His place, and marching with overwhelming grandeur over the high places of the earth to deal out punishment to the wicked. "Behold, the Lord cometh forth

out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be molten under Him," etc. etc. "The description of this theophany," says Delitzsch, "is founded upon the idea of a terrible storm and earthquake, as in Ps. xviii. 8. The mountains melt (Judg. v, 4 and Ps. lxxviii. 9) with the streams of water which discharge themselves from heaven (Judg. v. 4), and the valleys split with the deep channels cut out by the torrents of water. The similes 'like wax,' etc. (as in Ps. lxxviii. 3), and 'like water' are intended to express the complete dissolution of mountains and valleys. The actual facts answering to this description, are the destructive influences exerted upon nature by great national judgments."

The reference is undoubtedly to the destruction of the king of Israel by Shalmaneser, and the invasion of Judah by the armies of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, by the latter of whom the Jews were carried away captive.

The passage is an inexpressibly grand representation of God's *procedure in relation to sin*. Let us look at this procedure in two aspects.

I. AS IT APPEARS TO THE EYE OF MAN. The Bible is eminently anthropomorphic: it presents God to man in human attributes and modes of operation. Two thoughts are suggested—

First: God, in dealing out retribution, appears to man in an *extraordinary position*. "He cometh forth out of His place." What is His place? To all intelligent beings, the settled place of the Almighty is the

temple of love, the pavilion of goodness, the mercy seat. The general beauty, order, and happiness of the universe, give all intelligent creatures this impression of Him. But when confusion and misery fall on the sinner, the Almighty seems to man to come out of His "place," to step aside from His ordinary procedure. Not that He does so; but in man's view He seems to. The Immutable One does not change His purpose. His purpose is benevolent, though in carrying it forward it necessarily brings misery to those who oppose it.

Judgment is God's strange work. He comes out of His place to execute it.

Secondly: God, in dealing out retribution, appears to man in a *terrific aspect*. He does not appear as in the silent march of the stars or the serenity of the sun; but as in thunder storms and volcanic eruptions. "The mountains shall be molten under Him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire." Though the Almighty is as benign and serene when bringing deserved suffering upon the sinner, as He is when filling heaven with gladness, yet to the suffering sinner He always seems terrific. He seems to be rending the heavens, cleaving the mountains, and tearing the earth to pieces. God is evermore to an intelligent creature according to the moral state of his soul. Look at this procedure,—

II. AS IT AFFECTS A SINFUL PEOPLE. In God's procedure in relation to sin, what disastrous effects were brought upon Samaria and Jerusalem!

First; God, in His procedure

No. CXXI.

in relation to sin, brings *material ruin* upon people. "Therefore I will make Samaria as a heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." It means utter ruin. Sin brings material ruin upon a people, brings on commercial decay, political ruin, destroys the health of the body, and brings it ultimately to the dust. Sin brings material ruin.

Secondly: God, in His procedure in relation to sin, brings *mental anguish* upon a people. "And all the graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces, and all the hires thereof shall be burned with the fire, and all the idols thereof will I lay desolate." A disruption between the soul and the objects of its supreme affections, involves the greatest anguish. The gods of a people, whatever they may be, are these objects, and these are to be destroyed. "The graven images thereof shall be beaten to pieces." The divinities, the fanes, the priests—all shattered. Such is the ruin which sin brings on a people.

CONCLUSION: Mark well, that God has a course of conduct in relation to sin; or rather, that God, in His beneficent march, must ever appear terrible to the sinner and bring ruin on his head. It is the wisdom as well as the duty of all intelligent creatures, to move in thought, sympathy, and purpose as God moves—move with Him, not against Him. To move with Him, is to see Him in all the attraction of a Fatherhood; to move against Him, is to see Him in all the horrors of an infuriated Judge.

Subject: MORAL INCURABLENESS.

"Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked: I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls. For her wound is incurable; for it is come unto Judah; he is come unto the gate of my people, even to Jerusalem."—MICAH i. 8, 9.

These verses have been thus translated, "Therefore will I lament and howl; I will go spoiled and naked; I will keep lamentation like the jackals, and mourning like the ostriches. For her stripes are malignant, for it comes to Judah, reaches to the gate of My people, to Jerusalem." Micah's intention is not only to exhibit publicly his mourning for the approaching calamity of Judah, but also to set forth in a symbolical form the fate that awaits the Judeans. And he can only do this by including himself in the nation, and exhibiting the fate of the nation in his own person. "Wailing like jackals and ostriches, is a loud, strong, mournful cry, those animals being distinguished by a mournful wail."

We shall take these words as suggesting the subject of *moral incurableness*. Samaria and Jerusalem were, in a material and political sense, in a desperate and hopeless condition. Our subject is *moral incurableness*, and we make two remarks concerning it.

I. It is a condition INTO WHICH MEN MAY FALL.

First: *Mental Philosophy* shows this. Such is the constitution of the human mind, that the repetition of an act can generate an uncontrollable

tendency to repeat it ; and the repetition of a sin deadens altogether that moral sensibility which constitutionally recoils from the wrong. The mind often makes habit, not only second nature, but the sovereign of nature.

Secondly : *Observation* shows this. That man's circle of acquaintance must be exceedingly limited who does not know men who become morally incurable. There are incurable liars, incurable misers, incurable sensualists, and incurable drunkards. No moral logician, however great his dialectic skill, can forge an argument strong enough to move them from their old ways, even when urged by the seraphic fervour of the highest rhetoric.

Thirdly : *The Bible* shows this. What did Solomon mean when he said : "Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words?" What did Christ mean when He said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." And again : "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! But now they are hid from thine eyes." We often speak of retribution as if it always lay beyond the grave, and the day of grace as extending through the whole life of man ; but such is not the fact. Retribution begins with many men here ; the day of grace terminates with many before the day of

death. There are those who reach an unconvertible state, their characters are stereotyped and fixed as eternity.

II. It is a condition FOR THE PROFOUNDDEST LAMENTATION. At the desperate condition of his country the prophet is brought into the most poignant distress. "Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked. I will make a wailing like the dragons and mourning as the owls." Christ wept when He considered the moral incurableness of the men of Jerusalem. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem !" etc., etc. There is no sight more distressing than the sight of a morally incurable soul. There is no building that I pass that strikes me with greater sadness than the Hospital for "Incurables ;" but what are incurable bodies, compared to *morally incurable* souls? There are anodynes that may deaden their pains, and death will relieve them of their torture ; but a morally incurable soul is destined to pass into anguish, intense and more intense as existence runs on, and peradventure without end. The incurable body may not necessarily be an injury to others ; but a morally incurable soul must be a curse as long as it lives. Were we truly alive to the moral state of wicked men around us, we should be ready to break out in the words of the prophet, "Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked," etc.

Biblical Criticism.

Subject: The Righteousness of God.

τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν; μὴ ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ; μὴ γένοιτο. τῷ γὰρ Μωσὴ λέγει, Ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτερήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτείρω. Ἄρα οἶν οὐ τοῦ θέλοντος, οἷδὲ τοῖ τρεχοντος, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐλεοῦντος Θεοῦ. λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφὴ τῷ Φαραὼ Ὅτι εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἐξήγειρά σε, ὅπως ἐνδείξωμαι ἐν σοὶ τὴν δύναμίν μου, καὶ ὅπως διαγγελῇ τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν πάσῃ τῇ γῇ. Ἄρα οὖν ὃν θέλει, ἐλεεῖ· ὃν δὲ θέλει, σκληρύνει.—ROM. ix. 14-18.

Ver. 14.—“What shall we say then?” Can we therefore be accused of charging God with unrighteousness and unfairness by this assertion? By no means. For we declare God’s indisputable statement. “God forbid.” The Jews thought that they could not possibly be rejected by God, that the Gentiles could not possibly be received. As, therefore, an upright man treats insolent and spiteful suitors with more severity than he really feels, that he may defend his own or his patron’s rights, and may not unreasonably betray and sacrifice his character for liberality, so Paul defends God’s power and justice against the Israelites who trusted to their name and merits. On this subject he sometimes uses the appropriate terms to which it appears that he was formerly accustomed in the Pharisaic school. He says, no man can prescribe anything to the Lord God, nor demand and insolently wrest anything from Him as a debt, nor can any man prohibit Him in anything or require a reason why He is kind to others. Paul, therefore, abruptly checks, by a severe answer, captious and spiteful objectors. For it is lawful to no man to deal with God as if he were His creditor. Even if this were so, God deals more strictly with the man. Compare Matt. xx. 13-15, which is quite parallel: “I do thee no wrong,” etc. In one sense, therefore, Paul’s language refutes the advocates of good works. Another and milder one in behalf of believers, is concealed under his words. In the Scriptures too, especially when we proceed from the proposition to that on which the proposition rests, the modes of expression, as well as the reasonings, should be considered. Nevertheless, no comment can possibly be as

plain as the text of Paul, the sense of which the self-righteous man cannot fail to understand.

Ver. 15.—“For to Moses.” Many think that the objection extends from this verse to ver. 18. Thus “for” is used as in chap. iii. 7; and “thou wilt say then,” ver. 19, concludes the objection which was begun in ver. 14. In very fact, by this introduction of the adversary, the rejoinder which is censured in ver. 20, and afterwards refuted by the use of the words themselves or of their synonyms, would be suitably expressed. Meanwhile, Paul so speaks that the objector answers himself; therefore the words here may strictly be regarded as spoken in the person of the Apostle, as we shall now try to show. Moses (Exod. xxxiii.) had prayed for himself and the people by the grace of the Lord, and had concluded with “show me Thy glory.” The Lord answered, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.” The Lord did not immediately make known even to Moses those to whom He was about to show grace and mercy, although the question concerned Moses and the Israelites alone, not the Gentiles. To Moses,—not merely to others by Moses, *Μωσῆ*,—to Moses, says Paul, as afterwards *τῷ Φαραῶ*, to Pharaoh, the Lord spoke thus: “By my proclamation, and by most abundant working hereafter I will designate him as the object of grace and mercy on whomsoever I bestow grace and mercy.” Thus intimating that He would make proclamation concerning grace and mercy, which He soon after did (Exod. xxxiv. 6); “merciful and gracious,” etc., to thousands; adding, “and will by no means clear the guilty,” etc. Therefore, according to the subsequent proclamation, the meaning of the previous promise is clearly this:—“I will show thee grace so abundant that thou mayest see concerning me all that thou desirest and canst receive, that thou mayest further understand that it is grace; because I have once for all embraced thee in grace, and thou acknowledgest it is grace. And to the rest of the people I will show the most abundant mercy, in

not at once destroying them for their idolatry, that they may further understand that it is mercy ; because I have once for all embraced them in mercy and thou for them acknowledgest that it is mercy." The Septuagint and Paul have expressed the meaning of this sentence by the difference between the present and future tense : ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτερήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτείρω, " I will have mercy on whom I have mercy ; " not, as English version—" will have mercy." This is a *ploce* (repetition of a word to express an attribute of it) ; the sense being nearly the same as in chap. xiii. 7. This figure here expresses the liberty of the agent of whom the Apostle is speaking, as in Exod. xvi. 23. Moreover, each verb repeated in both the clauses, contains the emphasis on its first mention, although elsewhere the verb is usually emphasized when repeated. (Gen. xxvii ; xliii. 14 ; 2 Kings vii. 4). That the acknowledgment of grace and mercy by Moses and the true Israelites is also included, appears from this, that Paul speaks on the contrary of the man that willeth and that runneth, to whom grace is not grace, and mercy is not mercy. The Hebrew pronoun " on whom " is employed twice. It intimates in the former passage, that Moses (to whom the word " grace " is repeated from his own prayers in Exod. xxxiii. 13, where the same *ploce* occurs), and in the latter passage, that the others were among the thousands to whom sinners (their children, grandchildren, etc.) are opposed (Exod. xxxiv. 7). And thus this testimony is very well fitted to prove that there is no unrighteousness with God. The point is clear to believers. But to the advocates of good works it has too harsh a sound. The reason why God is merciful, is nought but His own mercy ; for no other ground is mentioned by Moses concerning Moses and Israel. " I will have mercy," that is, No one can forcibly extort anything ; all things are in My hand, under My authority and will ; if I act otherwise, no one can charge Me with injustice. These remarks sufficiently refute the defender of good works ; any further answer is superfluous.

Ver. 16.—" *So then.*" Paul's inference is not here drawn from ὃν ἂν, " on whom," but from " I have mercy " and " I have

compassion." "Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth." Supply it is the business, will, or course; not that it is vain to will rightly and, what is greater, to run or strive rightly, (1 Cor. ix. 26; Phil. iii. 14); but because to will and to run produce nothing sought by the defenders of works. The human will is opposed to Divine grace, and the human course to Divine operation.

Ver. 17.—"For." He proves that it is of him who shows mercy, even God. "Saith." He exhibits God speaking thus. "Pharaoh." Who lived in Moses' time. "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee." For this cause thou hast been preserved until now, that I might show My power. "Have I raised thee up." Sept., *διετηρήθης*, thou hast been preserved. As Exod. xxi. 21, *διαβιοῦν*, to pass one's life; but Paul, according to his custom, says more significantly, "have I raised thee up." Observe carefully, however, that by *ἐξεγείρω* here, the meaning of the verb "raise up" is not expressed as it is used in Zech. xi. 16, but "preserve in being," which in all cases presupposes the previous existence of the subject. The sense then is this: "I have raised thee up a king very powerful, in whom I might show My power, and illustrious, through whom My name might be proclaimed throughout the earth." Therefore this raising up includes the preserving, as the Sept. more mildly render it; and also the verb *ἤνεγκεν*, endured, which, in ver. 22, is introduced from the passage of Moses. The predecessor had begun to oppress Israel (Exod. ii. 23), and yet the successor did not repent. The *Ordo Temporum* (Chronology) makes his reign very short; and therefore his whole administration was an experience of power. We must add, that this was told to Pharaoh, not at first, but after excessive obstinacy, and it was not even then intended to discourage him from acknowledging Jehovah and releasing the people. The object was to reform him. "Power." By which Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned. "Might be declared." This is done to-day.

Ver. 18.—"Hath He mercy." As on Moses. "Whom He

will." Moreover, Paul shows elsewhere to whom God is willing to show mercy, and whom He is willing to harden. "*Hardeneth.*" That is, maketh incapable of receiving Divine salvation, as Pharaoh. He uses "harden" for "has not mercy," by the substitution of the consequent, although not to have mercy sounds somewhat harsher; so "is sanctified," for "is not unclean" (2 Cor. vii. 14); and "you rescued from," instead of "you did not deliver up" (Josh. xxii. 31). This hardening is—I. Not a beginning of evil in man. II. Not an aggravation of sin. III. It is a manifestation of punitive justice.

C. E. T.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CXCVIII.

Subject: THE HOLY BIBLE AND HUMAN SOULS.

"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."—JAMES i. 21.

Notice, I, The HOLY BIBLE. First: It is the "*word.*" A revelation of the Divine Mind. As a word, it is *pure, loving, faithful, conquering.* Secondly: It is the "*engrafted word.*" Mr. Davidson renders the word "engrafted" implanted. This word is a seed or germ, which is to be implanted in human souls, there to grow and flourish. It is "an incorruptible seed." Thirdly: It is the "*word*" to save. "Which is able to save your souls." From what does it save? From spiritual ignorance, prejudice, thralldom, selfishness, sensuality, guilt, etc. Such is the Bible, Blessed Book! Notice, II. The HUMAN SOUL. First: The *amazing capability* of the human soul. The strongest proof of the greatness of the human soul is, that it is capable of receiving the word of God. It is capable of taking into itself and growing the ideas of the Infinite Mind. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow," etc. Secondly: The *moral obligation* of the human soul. What is it? To "receive with meekness the engrafted word." You are bound to receive it; you are made for it. Receive it in a humble, reverent, docile spirit.

No. CXCIX.

Subject: THE WORSHIP OF HEAVEN.

“They sang a new song.”—REV. v. 9.

The sublime paragraph of which this is a part has been expounded in a previous volume of the *Homilist*. We take these few words now, merely because they suggest two thoughts concerning the worship of heaven. I. It is JUBILANT. “They sang.” Singing is the natural language of joy. The worship of heaven is not mechanical, not irksome. It is the outbreathing of the soul into rapture, the rapture of *gratitude, admiration, reverence, and love*. II. It is FRESH. “A new song.” There is nothing monotonous in heaven. Souls have an instinctive craving for variety, and the Creator has amply provided for this instinct. In the life of souls in heaven, there is something fresh every hour—fresh *sceneries, fresh occurrences, fresh engagements, fresh connections, fresh thoughts*; it is a “new song.” Heaven is ever fresh.

No. CC.

Subject: AUTUMN, A SEASON FOR NATIONAL INSTRUCTION.

‘Look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.’—JOHN iv. 35.

Autumn, or the “feast of harvest,” is not only a season for national *gratitude, national rejoicing, and national philanthropy*, but also a season for national *instruction*. Look at the harvest fields, and mark, I. The RESUSCITATING principle of the Divine government. What you see in the fields ripened to perfection, was a few months ago buried under the earth and apparently dead; but there is a resuscitating force in the Divine government that quickened the dormant germ. First: This principle is seen at work in the general mind of mankind, calling up buried thoughts and impressions. Secondly: In the conversion of souls, quickening the conscience and imparting spiritual vitality. Thirdly: This principle will be seen on a grand scale in the general resurrection. Mark, II. The RETRIBUTIVE principle in the Divine government. You see nature giving back what it has received. First: Giving back in *kind*. Wheat for wheat, barley for barley. Secondly: Giving back in *amount*. The more she receives, the more is given back. This is true also in the moral system.

“Be not deceived, God is not mocked ; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Mark, III. The MULTIPLYING principle in the Divine government. For one grain, many are given back—some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold. Nature is wonderfully prolific, its resources are inexhaustible. In the moral system it is the same. One true thought may run into thousands, one noble deed may become the parent of millions. Nothing true is lost ; on the contrary, everything true is multiplied. Virtue is an incorruptible and an ever-multiplying seed. Mark, IV. The MATURING principle in the Divine government. Through slow stages of growth all you see in the fields has reached a point of maturation. It is so in morals. Character ripens. There is the blade, the ear, the full corn in the ear. The time hastens with all, when Destiny will say, Thrust in the sickle, for the harvest is ready.

No. CCI.

Subject: THE CREATOR MINISTERING TO THE WANTS OF HIS CREATION.

“Thou openest Thine hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”—PSALM cxlv. 16.

How does the Almighty provide for his creatures? I. *Personally*. “Thou.” The pseudo-sage ascribes the fruits of the earth to the elements and laws of nature. But the Bible, which is true science, ascribes them to God. God has not left nature, He is in it, the great spirit in all the wheels of its machinery. There is a Personal God in personal action, in all nature, “Thou.” How does He provide? II. *Easily*. He has only to open His hand. There is no labour, no effort ; simply “Thou openest Thine hand.” How easily God does His work ! How easily He rolls ponderous globes and massive systems through immensity ! To communicate good to His creatures, is easy work to Him. First : it is *upreable* to His heart. He has not to struggle as we often do against inner propensions and habit in order to show kindness. It is a gratification to His benevolence. Secondly : it is *nothing* to his *power*. It costs Him no effort ; the whole universe arose at first by His word. How does He provide? III. *Abundantly*. “And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.” Every living thing, of every variety, from the minutest to the largest, from the microscopic insect to the mighty archangel.

No. CCII.

Subject: GIVING AND RECEIVING.

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”—ACTS xx. 35.

These words at once discover to us the explanation of all that is most beautiful in the scene described in the chapter. They indicate what was the governing spirit of Paul's life, the spirit that gave him the power over men he wielded. Again, these words suggest to us much about the unrecorded portions of our Saviour's life. As we read this sentence, we wonder when and where it was uttered. Perhaps in rebuke to Zebedee's wife, or to the disciples in some self-seeking hour, perhaps in praise of the woman in Simon's house or the widow at the Temple treasury. Yet again we have here a motto for every Christian. It reminds us, I. That we can only give what we have received. From man, or directly from God, we have received all that we possess, and our power of acquirement. II. That we have received in order that we may give. This is the teaching of revelation. It is in harmony with nature. The flowers do not retain, but emit their fragrance; the rivers do not hold back, but roll on their waters; the stars do not absorb, but reflect their light. It is suggested by our chief receptive organs; eye, lip, hand have as much to do with giving as receiving. III. It is better to give than to receive. It is good to receive, but better to give. 1. *It is nobler.* The weak, mean, frail, helpless, can receive. It was the teaching of the old classics, that it is a nobler thing to bestow. Artaxerxes tells how receiving marks the subject—giving, the ruler; Aristotle, how receiving marks the slave—giving, the freeman; Seneca, how receiving makes usurers—giving, the gods. 2. *It is diviner.* God is the Great Giver. They who would share His Spirit and enter into His delights, must give.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Bristol.

No. CCIII.

Subject: JUSTIFIED BY CHRIST'S BLOOD.

“Much more then, being now justified by His blood,” etc.—ROM. v. 9.

Some texts speak of the subject of faith, others of the object of faith, and others boldly and distinctly of the severed object as that which saves; meaning, to be consistent, the object when believed in. We are justified by faith. We are saved by faith in

Christ's blood. We are justified by His blood ; only when believed in as such. What faith sees, justifies ! It is not faith, but the death of Jesus ; which we can only appreciate by faith. This "blood" is therefore as good as non-existent (for our justification) if we have not the faith in it which must lead us to depend on it as our ransom from guilt and sinfulness. Now, may we be permitted to lay the quoted text on another more involved one (Rom. iii. 24, 25). "*Being justified*," (the present passive participle, as Rom. v. 9, has the first aorist passive participle) . . . (verse 25) *ἐν, by His blood* (*ἐν*, as in the first quoted passage of this epistle). Thus, Rom. iii. 24, 25, would beautifully read, true to Pauline parenthesis, as follows :—"BEING JUSTIFIED, —freely, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory or mercy-seat through faith), BY HIS BLOOD !" Suffer one word more, for better critics also to decide on. If the above be correct, or if not, the continuing words "to declare His righteousness διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν," κ.τ.λ. make the instance of righteousness here declared to be, not the blood (or atonement), but the forgiveness. A similar construction is in Romans iv. 25 : "Who was delivered BECAUSE OF our offences ; and was raised again BECAUSE OF our justification." The blood,—the death, that is,—having justified us (believing therein) He was raised again ; the mere dying having sufficed. How awfully pure our loving Father's holiness ! With Him, pardon requires on man's side to be a justification by Christ's death, and on God's side an act of justice to Christ's death. Holy, holy, holy is He !

JAMES TOWNLEY.

Trinity, Walford Road, London.

PIOUS FRAUDS.—Let us hold with Coleridge, that religious frauds are the worst of frauds, bearing dreary crops of misery, deceit, and crime, at utter variance with the faith, the trust, and the truth that lie at the root of the spiritual life of man. For we may not hold back a truth, utter an untruth. The freest disclosure alone combines safety and peace. Faith must not be at issue with itself, religion cannot be irrational or untrue. We may not conceive God otherwise than as absolute truth, perfect goodness, infinite wisdom. And to God and our own conscience are we alone accountable for discerning those attributes in Him.—*Dr. MacCormac.*

The Chief Founders of the Chief Faiths.

Around no men, amongst all the millions of mankind, does so much interest gather as around the Founders of the Chief Religious Faiths of the world. Such men are sometimes almost lost in the obscurity of remote ages, or of the mystery with which they surrounded themselves or their early followers invested them. But whenever they can be discerned their characters analysed, and their deeper experiences understood, they are found to be, not only leaders and masters of the multitudes who have adopted more or less of their creed and ritual, but also interpreters (more or less partial) of the universal yearnings of the soul of man. Such men may have seemed to sit at the fountains of human thought and feeling, and to have directed or have coloured the mysterious streams; but they have quite as often indicated in their doctrines and in their deeds the strong courses of the thoughts and feelings which are more permanent and deeper than any one man or even any one age could completely discover. The aim of these papers will be, with necessary brevity, to review the chief of such men, noting suggestively rather than exhaustively, their *biography*, their *circumstances*, their *theology*, and their *ethics*. And in concluding the series, it is proposed to compare and to contrast each and all of them with the "One Man whom in the long roll of ages we can love without disappointment and worship without idolatry, the Man Christ Jesus."

PRINCIPAL BOOKS OF REFERENCE.—Max Müller's "History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature," "The Science of Language," "Chips from a German Workshop;" Rev. F. D. Maurice's "Religions of the World;" Archdeacon Hardwick's "Christ and other Masters;" Rev. J. W. Gardner's "Faiths of the World;" Miss Mary Carpenter's "Last Days of Rammohun Roy;" Rev. F. W. Farrar's "Witness of History to Christ;" Rev. A. W. Williamson's "Journey in North China;" Canon Liddon's Bampton Lecture on "Our Lord's Divinity;" Cousin's "History of Modern Philosophy;" S. Clarke's "Ten Great Religions;" Father Iluc's "Christianity in China;" Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-worship."

SECOND SERIES.

No. IV.

JESUS AND ZOROASTER.

NO figure of all those at whom we have glanced, appears, as we have seen,* more distant or dim than that of the great Persian whom we have now to compare and contrast with the Saviour of the World. It is very clear, however, that the sense of the conflict between Good and Evil is the keynote both of the history of the man Zoroaster, and of his religious system. As Christians, we at once feel that there is in this one fact very much that our Lord and Master had in common with him, and that Christianity has in common with this Iranic religion. In pursuing the method we have already

applied to Buddhism and Confucianism and Mahometanism, we notice about the theme now before us,—

I. JESUS, LIKE ZOROASTER, TEACHES THAT THERE IS A MOMENTOUS CONFLICT GOING ON BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

How many of our Lord's *parables*, as for instance that of the Tares among the Corn, or of the Wicked Husbandmen persecuting and slaying Divine Messengers, and even the Divine Son, are pictures of the moral antagonisms of our world ! Indeed, all His parables that illustrate "the Kingdom of Heaven," reveal that kingdom as in essential collision with the kingdoms of selfishness and sin that hold their terrific sway over the human race. The *miracles*, too, recorded in the gospels, such especially as that which quelled the storm, or those which healed the sick, or expelled devils, or raised the dead, reveal, not only a conflict between Good and Evil, but the victorious power of Good. Then there are our Lord's direct *statements*, that He came, "not to give peace, but a sword," and that "He that is not with Me is against Me," statements repeated in many forms that not only acknowledge the spiritual war, but assert His leadership. Now, as we have seen, Zoroastrianism is full of the same teaching. Light, which is the symbol, not of Intelligence only, but of Goodness, is in essential and unresisting war with Darkness, the appropriate symbol of all that is the opposite of Intelligence and Goodness. Ormuzd, the Lord of Light, is fiercely and ceaselessly opposed by Ahriman, the Prince of Darkness. The liturgy is full of appeals and hopes for the victory of Ormuzd, and of prescriptions and ceremonies which shall, in their way, serve the ruin of Ahriman. That indeed seems to be the one light that gleams on the pages of the Zendavesta, the one spirit of life that throbs through its teachings. So that whilst only one, and He the Captain of human Salvation, has given us clear light on the causes and principles and methods of such a Holy War as John Bunyan depicts, we are sure that the Bedford Dreamer was not more conscious of that war than was the Persian Sage, who, if he knew less, scarcely felt less about "the good fight of Faith."

II. JESUS, LIKE ZOROASTER, TEACHES THAT THIS CONFLICT HAS CONNECTION WITH OTHER WORLDS THAN THIS.

When we listen to the Redeemer declaring that "angels rejoice over" men who forsake sin, or that "Satan has desired to have" one of the twelve disciples, or that a word could have summoned "twelve legions of angels" to His own aid, we learn to regard this earth but as the theatre of the war at which spectators gaze, and from which convoys come from the unseen universe. The Persian creed points also, as we have seen, to the unseen universe, for explanation of the origin of the war, for the motive power on either side, and for the forces that shall decide the final issue. Every Magian's every act of worship implies what Christ distinctly and authoritatively teaches about a heaven and a hell, the supplies of grace, and the machinations of the devil.

III. JESUS, LIKE ZOROASTER, TEACHES THAT THE CONFLICT WILL END IN THE VICTORY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Here again, we might quote from the Saviour's *parables*, to show the certain, complete, and calm conquests of righteousness—conquests illustrated, for instance, in "leaven that leavens the whole lump," or in a complete clearing of the wheat from tares and destruction of them by burning. We might quote His *miracles* of healing and life-giving as dawning lights of the full and unending noon of a Sun of Righteousness. Or such *statements* of His as, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Or, not least of all, His teaching His disciples to offer as a *prayer* that will surely be fulfilled, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." And though the hope did not rest on such foundations as the Christian, it is very clear Zoroaster not only yearned for, but believed in, the eventual conquest of the right. He felt the battle must be long. But, said he, at the last, Ahriman himself shall be purified, Evil shall disappear. A conflagration that shall be kindled by the Infinite Being, "Time without bounds," who produced both Ormuzd and Ahriman, shall, as in a stream of melted iron, purify all things, for through it all beings must pass. Thereafter not only will Ahriman himself, but all in

his abyss also, be clarified, all evil consumed, all darkness banished. Remembering universal human yearnings, and our Saviour's words and works, who shall say how far such Persian hope adumbrates the fuller teaching of the Christian's faith, that "our God is a consuming fire" ?

Whilst there are such resemblances as these, there are striking and deep and far-reaching contrasts between the Divine Redeemer of the world and the religious sage of Persia. But they are so evident, and so implied again and again even in our notes, that they do not require much further notice here, except that we may well remember, (1) That we have the Saviour's life in the fulness of a fourfold biography, however dim and distant other founders are. There indeed is one great glory of Christianity; for while religions that are mere mysticisms—like Brahminism and Gnosticism and most of the religions of Egypt and Greece, are without personal founders, those religions that are moral—such as those of Buddha, Confucius, Mahomet, Zoroaster, centre in a person. That person is the living centre of the system; from him radiates its life and light. While of all such as radiate from a person, none have that person's life so fully delineated and so copiously recorded as that system has whose central Person is the only Perfect Man, the Christ of God. In contrast we may again remember, (2) That Jesus Christ reveals One Absolute Ruler of the universe; not, as Zoroaster dreams and proclaims, two antagonistic and nearly equally balanced sovereigns. The Christian faith is in one King-Father, not in the Dualism that easily becomes prolific with the polytheism of false religions. Yet a final point of contrast to be remembered is, (3) That Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the Captain of Salvation, and the way to victory. This we have already seen, and it is so clear in Christ's doctrine about Himself that "he who runs may read." This egoism is not in Zoroaster. And if it had been, it would not be warranted by the history of his system. For the body of Parsees that exists to-day is small and ever diminishing. Whilst, notwithstanding all that discourages and beclouds the horizon of human life, it

surely is to be gratefully acknowledged that Jesus Christ saw some worshippers in every language, some followers on every shore, and that their number grows and will grow, till "the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever."


URIJAH R. THOMAS.

Bristol.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Illustrator* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Balanus,—Age altering Habit.

 FEW years often change the habits of a man. The middle-aged man has scarcely any of the habits of the youth left. And if the proof of his identity depended on their resemblance, it would indeed be hard to establish. A like change of habit is observable in many other existences. We may take from a class of molluscs the acorn-shells (*Balanus balanoides*) as an example. It is a very remarkable fact, that, although the balanus never moves from the spot on which it has taken up its habitation, and, indeed, is incapable of any kind of locomotion, yet when very young it was an active, wandering little creature, furnished with jointed limbs, much resembling a shrimp or crab, and swimming freely through the water with a succession of bounds. What a complete settling down to quiet ways, what a thorough transformation is here! But is it more striking than the metamorphosis of the hobbledohoy youngster into the sedate sage?

Subject: Solar Rays,—Human Opinions concerning God.

IT cannot be too clearly impressed upon the inquirer, that human opinions respecting God have frequently merely the effect of obscuring the glories of God. They are only the media, often the dense and unhealthy media, through which certain human intelligences look at Him ; and, so far from revealing Him, they, rising from impure sources, obstruct the clear view which under other influences might be obtainable. Let men's opinions in different ages and lands be what they may respecting God, He is still absolutely the same and unchanged. That which changes, is the human opinion or medium through which men gaze. And it is pestilent or wholesome according to an infinitude of circumstances. Sometimes we see the sun with absolute clearness. When there are less favourable conditions, it is enveloped in dimness. But the change is not in the sun. It is contingent upon the exhalations of sublunary things. For it is evident that at each hour of the day the solar rays come from the parts above the atmosphere with the same power, whether the sky be clear or clouded. If no cloud intervenes, all the rays come to the surface of the earth and heat it ; but if one half or one fourth of them should be intercepted by cloud, only the other half or three fourths of the rays can affect the surface ; and when the whole sky is covered with dense clouds, the greater part of the solar rays will be intercepted by them.

Subject: Warriors the Followers of Insects.

IF the genus *eciton* (a species of foraging ants) are abroad upon a foraging expedition, they spread out their columns, climbing over every leaf, plant, shrub, and tree, putting the whole animal as well as insect world into commotion and alarm. All apterous insects, particularly *blattæ* and spiders, are preyed upon. At other times, a community of *ecitons* engage in a regular attack upon a nest of some peaceful and industrious species of *Formica*. The *ecitons* crowd into the nests of the ants, each seizing upon a helpless victim, and carry or drag it out of the nest. If the ant prove too heavy for a single

eciton to carry, it is ruthlessly torn into pieces, two or more assisting in the operation. The march is then commenced back to the nest of ecitons; the living ants and the mangled remains of others being probably carried there for the purpose of feeding the young brood of the marauders. From studying these creatures and their methods and depredations, the conclusion seems forced upon us, that they must have been invaluable as examples to warriors and to those scientific gentlemen of blood-thirsty taste, whose carefully elaborate statistical treatises on methods of attack, in which, with the greatest nicety, there are given calculations showing how the greatest plunder can be taken from the enemy with the least injury to the invader and with the most ruinous results to the enemy. And really the question is not easily disposed if we ask whether men show more genius than insects in their warfare. In what do the foraging insects differ from those of these ants, except in magnitude of suffering?

Subject: The Maggot—Moral Transformations.

THERE are marvellous transformations in the material as well as in the moral world. The full-fed maggot, that has rolled in filth till its tender skin seems ready to burst with repletion, when the appointed time comes, leaves the offensive matters it was ordained to assist in removing, and gets into some convenient hole or crevice; then its body contracts or shortens, and becomes egg-shaped, while the skin hardens and turns brown and dry, so that under this form the creature appears more like a seed than a living animal; after some time passed in this inactive and equivocal form, during which wonderful changes have taken place within the seed-like shell, one end of the shell is burst off, and from the inside comes forth a buzzing fly, that drops its former filthy habits with its cast-off dress, and now, with a more refined taste, seeks only to lap the solid viands of our tables or sip up the liquid contents of our cups.

Look again into the moral world. There you see a trans-

formation as wonderful. The selfish debauchee, whose horrid taste has grubbed in every sort of immoral filth and become habituated to the base, the evil, and the dishonourable, has been brought into contact with the necessary spiritual conditions for a change ; and behold, from one stage to another he passes, until at last his tastes are entirely altered, and his existence is changed, and even he is able to join in the light and purity of the world. Elsewhere behold the miser is transformed to the philanthropist, the coward into a hero. We watch the fly's aerial circlings in the sunbeam, and remember with wonder its degraded origin. The preacher looks over his congregation, and, as he sees those who have become noble and virtuous, he is able to take heart for new work ; for, as he remembers in their presence the deluded and the wicked who are yet to be transformed, he says, "And such were some of you ; but you are regenerated by the higher power, and these others may be changed likewise."

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

SKETCHES PHILOSOPHIC AND RELIGIOUS

BY W. B. CHILLOW.

DIOGENES AND HIS LANTERN.

—The story of Diogenes going about with a lantern in the daytime in quest of an honest man, or, as his namesake the biographer of the philosophers has it, in quest of a MAN, may not unaptly symbolize the case of a mind endeavouring to find out truth amid the labyrinth of prevailing opinions ; all bearing the name, yet masking the most opposite or heterogeneous principles—an inquisition, therefore, neither superfluous through the lapse of ages, nor to be quelled

by a self-complacency that would interpret the non-acceptance of its own conclusions into a symptom of mental or moral dis-temperature.

PATRONAGE OF PHANTASMS.—

Truth, of whatever kind, is only fact or reality. But in a multitude of instances mankind are much fonder of fiction than reality ; all false sentiments being so many fictions or fancies in place of facts. One reason may be, that there is often considerable difficulty in arriving at facts, but little or none in

taking up with some vague or apparent resemblances. It is with great beauty that Plato speaks of truth as τὸ ὄν, that which *is*, in contradistinction to what he stigmatizes as τὸ δοξαστόν, or that which consists in opinion, though, in the application of these expressions, the founder of the Academy proceeds on views somewhat remote from modern speculation, except as concerned with the curiosities of a vanished or a transcendental phase of philosophy; limiting the τὸ ὄν to those eternal archetypes or ideas which he supposed to reside immutably, yet as distinct essences, in the Divine Reason; while all outward things, and the notions of them, are but shadows or fantastic mockeries. To the knowledge of external objects therefore, as perpetually changing, and subject to dissolution, he refused the name of truth or science, employing the epithet δοξαστόν, expressive of such knowledge as unreal, or dependent on appearance.

INTELLECTUAL SCAFFOLDING.—There are multitudes of truths which are worthless in themselves, and merit attention merely as stepping stones, or as a ladder conducting to something ulterior. When that is attained, the ladder may be dispensed with. The time will perhaps arrive when the topics which have served the infancy of reason, and the facts which may be compared to the scaffolding of an edifice, being laid aside, the essence of truth in every department will be so condensed and simplified as to come within the reach of the most limited capacity. This would still leave boundless

scope for disquisition and varieties of view; as hitherto problems and perplexities have multiplied faster than solutions or discoveries, and that too in proportion to the amount of civilization and culture. The nations most advanced in the career of intelligence and refinement, have always been the most speculative and curious. It was so with the Oriental nations most famed in the history of thought, among whom so many sects and philosophies sprang up. It was so with the most polished State of classical antiquity, the subtle and meditative Athenians. It has been so in Western Europe since the revival of letters, and especially since the breaking down of the old landmarks of opinion by the French Revolution. It is so at present with individuals in relation to each other. The larger their comprehension and sagacity, the greater commonly is the number of points on which fancy or reflection can lead them to differ; for it is in the nature of a developed mind to stretch its contemplation into remoter tracts, while every mind has its original or acquired peculiarities.

FOLLOWING IN THE TRACK.—The greater part of current opinions are entertained by the majority without evidence, intellectual or experimental; being transmitted from one to another as an heir-loom, and differing in fact little from what may be called stereotyped views of things. Most persons who hold truth, do so on the same principles that determine others in the adoption or retention of error; namely, education, fancy, connections, interest,

or the like; and the truths which they profess, they are incapable of proving to be truths, however susceptible of demonstration. The consequence often is, that many are willing enough to look at both sides of a question within certain precincts; but once touch their own sentiments or faction, and their seeming impartiality vanishes.

BIAS OF THOUGHT.—If there is any one attribute common to man which is engrafted on his original nature, and entirely the growth of circumstances, that attribute is prejudice. To meet a person altogether exempt from its influence, may be pronounced, if not impossible, at least one of the most difficult things in the world. It is not easy to say whether prejudice resides most in mansions or in cottages; in courts or in camps; among the clergy or the laity; philosophers or the vulgar; authors or their readers. The forms which it assumes vary with each individual understanding, being almost as numerous as the several opinions of mankind; and what seems remarkable, those whom it most sways are generally least conscious of its operation. The weakness, in each of its Protean shapes sufficiently ignoble, in none appears more so than when contrasted with its opposite, fairly enough defined by the admirable Medea, in relation to his own learned and ingenious, though often fanciful lucubrations, “if I have hit upon any truth,” says he in a letter to Mr. Hartlib, “It is wholly to be attributed to my indifferency in such searches, to embrace

whatsoever I should find, without any regard whether it were for the advantage of one side or another:” a memorable remark of that distinguished man in extenuation of his own abilities, which appear to have been so much shrouded from their possessor as they were conspicuous to others. The observation may remind one of a saying of Sir Isaac Newton’s, that if he had made any discoveries about the rest of mankind, it was owing to nothing but industry and patient thought: a circumstance, by the way, which would alone suffice to show that excellence such as Newton’s, though matchless in its kind, by no means indicates the highest order of genius. In general, men have so little patient or independent thought, that they are like travellers over a plain covered with snow who, if there be no track, are bewildered, but if they find one, are too happy to slide into the footsteps already provided.

BEST KIND OF PATIENCE.—Many persons have patience in affliction who have little or none in the pursuit of truth. Yet in the latter case it is more beneficial, being productive of positive advantage; while in the former the advantage is chiefly negative.

IMPEDIMENTS TO TRUTH.—It were easier to imagine than portray the extent to which the progress of truth is, not only impeded, but often supplanted for a time, by that of error, in consequence of the precipitance and passion of men, and the multiplicity and haste in which works are now published. Harvey is said to

have spent eight years in maturing his discovery respecting the circulation of the blood before he communicated it to the world. A genuine search after truth, whose dwelling is beyond the haunts and perturbations of the multitude, is a very quiet, unostentatious thing.

PAINTED TRUTH.—The goddess herself has not sufficient charms to captivate the vulgar, but must be veiled in mystery, or invested with adventitious ornaments or attractions, to strike the popular fancy. An unsophisticated mind loves truth for her very simplicity,

and contemns alike the arts of the sophist and the empiric.

TRUTH'S PARTIAL VOTARIES.—Her praises are sounded by many who are at best but her partial votaries; among whom I fear Dr. Johnson, admirable above most for high moral self-reliance and integrity, was one; who would denounce the slightest deviation from fact in a statement of distance or time, or other insignificant minutiae, but who felt little scrupulosity in the colouring of a controverted question, or in bearing down the force of evidence to achieve a momentary triumph in debate.

Literary Notices.

[We hold it to be the duty of an Editor either to give an early notice of the books sent to him for remark, or to return them at once to the Publisher. It is unjust to praise worthless books; it is robbery to retain unnoticed ones.]

THE REVIEWER'S CANON.

In every work regard the author's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend.

THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE. A Sermon preached during the Visit of the British Association to Bristol, 1875, Redland Park Church, by REV. GEORGE DEANE, D.Sc., F. G. S. London: Hodder & Stoughton. Price sixpence.

This is a suggestive and well-reasoned sermon on one of the greatest themes of our day, and was very appropriate to the occasion on which it was delivered. Its stand-point is unassailable. For it argues, and illustrates the argument in many forcible ways, that since both Biblical Science, or Theology, and Natural Science are both developing, and so continually undergoing modifications in some of their respective utterances, it is hasty and premature and altogether unscientific to pronounce on their final agreement or disagreement. The dogmatism of many

scientists, not less than that of many theologists, is well combated by one who evidently understands what he is writing about.

PASTORAL THEOLOGY. By the late PATRICK FAIRBAIRN, D.D. WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR BY REV. JAMES DODDS. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark..

The preface will put our readers in possession of the nature and contents of this volume. "The lamented Author of this treatise lived to prepare it for the press. It seems to have been originally written in its present form, though it was repeatedly delivered to his class as a course of lectures. There can also be little doubt that it was intended to be a sequel or companion volume to his recently published work on the Pastoral Epistles. As such it may be safely accepted by the public; for the sound judgment, lofty aim, and evangelical spirit that characterize the work on the Epistles will not be found wanting in the present performance. Though probably not free from the defects almost inseparable from posthumous publications, the following pages will, it is hoped, amply sustain the high character of Principal Fairbairn as a theological professor. They relate to a subject which in these days is of growing importance, and which has by no means been exhausted, though several good practical works connected with it have of late made their appearance. Principal Fairbairn left instructions that no extended memoir of him should be published by any of his friends. Accordingly nothing of the kind has been attempted; but as he also indicated that he had no objection to a brief record of the leading events of his life being given to the public, it has been thought advisable by his trustees that such a summary should be prefixed to this work. A succinct Biographical Sketch has therefore been prepared by one who knew him long and well, who was among the first to become acquainted with his high merits as an author, and who always regarded with admiration his noble Christian character."

The Biographical Sketch which this work contains, though short, is interesting and well written. With the "Typology of Scripture," "Ezekiel," "the Book and its Prophecy," some of Dr. Fairbairn's translations, we have long been familiar; also with his "Imperial Bible Dictionary," and "Pastoral Epistles." And from few theological writers of this age have we derived greater good. Whilst none of his works are marked with any great brilliance, striking originality, or rhetoric charm, they are all profoundly thoughtful, intelligent, and instructive. He has nobly served his generation by the will of God, and he has fallen asleep. He hath entered into the rest which remaineth to the people of God. The treatise here on the office and duties of the Christian pastor possesses all the valuable characteristics of his former productions. It comprises nine chapters, the subjects of which are,—“The relation of the Pastoral office to the Church, and the Connection between Right Views of the One

and a Proper Estimate of the Other ; The Nature of the Pastoral Office and the Call to Enter on its Functions ; The Pastoral and Social Life of the Pastor ; The more Special Duties of the Pastoral Office ; Different Kinds of Discourses ; Supplementary Methods of Instruction ; Public Prayer, and other Devotional Services ; The Administration of Discipline ; Subsidiary Means and Agencies." This work will be invaluable to the young minister who is just entering on his pastoral duties.

JESUS IN THE MIDST. BY GEORGE CRON. Glasgow : Thomas Morison.

One of the most deeply interesting, morally significant, and heart-touching incidents in the evangelical biography, is that of the woman " which was a sinner," in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of sermons have been preached on this historic fragment. It has always had special attractions for those preachers of the Holy Word who possess susceptibilities for the highest order of impressions. The observations and reflections comprised in the beautiful little volume before us are all drawn from this heart-thrilling incident. The volume consists of six chapters or discourses, the subjects of which are,—“ The Advantage of a Plurality of Gospels ; Christ Invited to a Feast ; An Unexpected Visitor ; The False Logic of Simon ; An Explanation Volunteered ; A Humbling Comparison ; Forgiveness and Love ; A Thrilling Announcement ; A Glorious Dismissal.” The author, who is regarded as one of the ablest ministers in the earnest and growing denomination to which he belongs, and who has contributed several valuable discourses to our pages, appears in this volume to great advantage. He is seen here with his keen eye, peering into the deep spiritual principles that underlie words and sentences ; with his strong intellect, analyzing, combining, adjudicating ; and with his great manly heart aglow with love to Christ and human souls.

THE HOMILIST. The proposed re-publication of the first *eleven* volumes, comprising the First and Second Series, brought into eight small or four large volumes, to be published in two years, at £2 2s. the entire set, has been more than once brought under the notice of our readers. A large number have sent in their names as subscribers, but at present not sufficient to justify commencement. The enterprise will involve a large capital, and the price be so low that the outlay can only be returned by an extensive circulation. It would be gratifying to us to spend our leisure hours in going carefully through these eleven volumes (of which 50,000 have been sold) and making them in every way as perfect as it is possible for us to do. But the matter must rest with those who believe in the importance of the work. If each of our readers will take the responsibility of disposing of one set, and send their names, we will lose no time in bringing out the volumes.



A HOMILY

ON

Biblical Holiness.

“As He which hath called you is holy, [after the pattern of that Holy One who hath called you] so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy.”—1 PETER i, 15, 16.

TWO strong currents of religious thought and action are flowing side by side before us, and we have to decide whether or not they flow from the eternal fountain of all truth and life. One movement aims at *extension*, seeking to widen the field of Christian usefulness ; the other aims at *depth*, seeking to deepen the roots and so to multiply the fruits of Christian excellency. It is of this latter that we now speak.

Is there then, or is there not, another and better path, a shorter and more scriptural way, to holiness of heart than the Church of Christ has been supposing ? That is the question we have to solve, and it is no mere theological problem ; it is a solid and practical question of our inner and outer life. Has the Christian Church been neglecting for many centuries a source of sanctity which, if found and employed, would have made its ex-

perience immeasurably higher and its history unspeakably happier?

We are being told that we may be sanctified (or made holy) even as we are justified, *instantaneously*; that holiness is to be acquired "through faith;" that if we will but do that which at any hour we may do, "consecrate ourselves wholly to Christ" and look for the outpouring of the Spirit, we shall receive in a favoured moment such a baptism of the Holy Ghost as will immediately heighten our Christian life and will continuously sustain us in spiritual strength and joy; that, thenceforth our experience will not be subject to unhappy fluctuations, but will be an abiding state of spiritual rest and power in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, is THIS so? If it be, there is no reason why we should not in one week make half our hymns inapplicable, not by reason of their over-statements, but by reason of their spiritual shortcomings; no reason why we should not leave them behind us as dirges of the desert, and retune our harp to psalms of the promised land; no reason why we should not all of us rise into a spiritual condition in which our prayers would have to be entirely reformed and our sermons of past years be as worthless as programmes of past meetings.

The marked excellency of spirit, the purity of life, the unquestionable sincerity of those who invite us to this "more excellent way," and the fact that they tell us that their own experience corresponds with their doctrine, make it almost imperative on us that we should consider whether we have not something to learn and something to acquire.

Let us see whether we can determine—

I. *What is that holiness of which scripture speaks;* and let us at once, not only allow, but insist with all emphasis and earnestness, that we are called unto holiness, that we

altogether fail and fall short of Christ's redeeming purposes except we attain some height of holiness in the sight of God. Here we hit a blot in the expressions and the practice of many, perhaps even a majority of, Christian men. It is a common thing for those who have been the servants of Christ for a long period to express themselves as if they were tremulous beginners, who hardly knew whether they had entered the kingdom of God. After years of Christian experience we ought to know our state, to rejoice in our felt freedom, to be sure of our sonship, to feel happy in the conscious friendship of Jesus Christ; we ought to have the air and spirit of those who know God to be our Father, who know ourselves to be His children and heirs, who know that Christ is ours and that we are His.

And there must be something seriously wrong about us if we cannot give thanks to God for advancement in likeness to Christ, for greater conformity to His own nature, for increase in holiness. God's will is our sanctification. We are chosen unto obedience through sanctification of the spirit. We are called to be holy ones. Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to Himself a people peculiarly His own, zealous of good works. We are to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the living epistles of Christ, the imitators of God. There is no question that the new teachers are right in calling on us to take a high view of our present estate in Christ Jesus; they are quite right in urging that it is not only the forgiveness of sin and a title to eternal glory that we are to inherit by faith in Christ, but a present possession of eternal life—a life in God, a life unto God, beautiful with Christian virtue, bright with heavenly joy. The root thought of holiness is *separation*: one is holy or is sanctified when he is separated *from* that which is evil or inferior and *unto* that which is good or

supreme. A Christian man is holy, just as he is separate from sin and consecrated unto God. The two are inseparable in scriptural holiness. Mere withdrawal from sinful places, persons, and actions, without a cleaving of heart unto the Holy One, may be legality, but is not holiness in God's esteem. On the other hand, frequent approach to a throne of Grace and much praise of the Infinite One, without a hatred of evil and turning from transgression—this may be devotion, but it is not holiness. The two things must be conjoined—a forsaking of all that is evil in the sight of God, and a union and communion of spirit with the Holy One Himself. To this every Christian man is most undoubtedly called; and surely he must be a strange Christian who does not know and feel it to be true. Possibly he may not put it to himself in these particular words, but the truth itself he knows, or he can be a Christian in nothing but the name. There seems to me a grave error or oversight in the theology of some of these modern teachers at this point. They demand that Christian men should come into a state of entire consecration to Christ, and then look for a life-quickening effusion of the Spirit. If they do not forget, they at least fail to state, that no man ever enters the kingdom of Christ without surrendering himself, under Divine influence, wholly to his Saviour. That faith in Jesus Christ which does not accept Him for all that He offers to be to the soul, which only leans on His propitiatory work, and does not cheerfully accept Him as Sovereign of the soul and as Lord of the life henceforth and evermore, is dead, is vain. No man can truly trust in Christ as a Saviour until, taught heavenly wisdom by the Holy Spirit of God, he longs to be saved from sin and to be brought into a state of union and fellowship with the God from whom he has guiltily departed. No man ever is saved by Jesus Christ who does not “yield himself unto God,” and de-

termine, by God's help, to "depart from all iniquity." Any interval between faith in Jesus Christ and the consecration of the soul to Him, is unknown to Scripture and to the experience of the holy. Some qualification has to be made, indeed, respecting the actual fulness, the absolute completeness of this spiritual surrender; but, taking Scripture with Scripture, we affirm that the true order is this—first: the illumination of the Spirit of God, showing the sinfulness of sin and the excellency of Christ and His service; then the consequent faith in Him—a faith which includes trust in His atoning work for the forgiveness of sin, and also an acceptance of Him as the true Friend and Lord of the soul, to whom everything is to be surrendered. Then, from this great starting-point comes the new life, a life of trust, and love, and obedience, and joy in Christ Jesus, nourished by the word of God and continually sustained by the indwelling Spirit. I urge, that from the time of the first awakening of the soul by the Spirit of God, there are found within both a deliberate intention to devote all things to the Saviour's service, and the action, in lesser or larger measure, of the same Spirit, the Divine Sanctifier of our human nature.

Now, let me meet the difficulty which immediately suggests itself, to meet which there has been some departure from old lines, and, I think, from scriptural truth. It will be said, "But if there be this consecration of self from the beginning, and this indwelling of the Spirit, how is it that so many Christian lives are so unbeautiful and so unspiritual as they are? I answer, *because Christian life*, under the conditions to which we are subject here, is, as Scripture plainly states, a *struggle and an endeavour*. Because such is our broken and damaged nature, and such is our human life, so beset with hindrances and adversaries, that our progress must be a *growth*, gradual and slow—first the blade, then the

ear, after that the full corn in the ear—first the babe, then the child, then the man in Christ Jesus; must be a *building up*, stone after stone of spiritual work; must be a *discipline*, an exercising ourselves unto godliness; must be a *race*, in which every impediment has to be thrown away and every nerve and muscle strained to full tension; must be a *wrestling*, in which there is resistance unto blood, so strenuous is the strife; must be a *campaign*, in which no defensive armour is to be forgotten and no offensive weapon unused, so vigilant and so powerful is the foe.

I need not urge that these are Scriptural representations of Christian life; and all else in the New Testament is in harmony with them. Paul wrote many letters to his converts. He assumes that they are holy, that they have consecrated themselves to Christ, that they are living in conscious and happy fellowship with their Father and their Saviour. He uses, indeed, hyperbolical language respecting their spiritual state,—which some have not had discernment enough to perceive is figurative, and which they have misunderstood,—which unmistakably supposes them to be living under the quickening impulses of God's Spirit. Nevertheless he finds it very necessary to reprove, rebuke, and exhort them. He takes it for granted, not only that they had much knowledge to gain, but much of elementary goodness to acquire; that their sanctification was by no means complete, that it was proceeding at a greater or smaller rate, depending on the use they made of the means of grace and growth at their disposal. He speaks even of himself as strenuously pressing toward the goal of Christian perfection, needing to restrain by energetic effort (castigate, literally) his own body, in order to have it in subjection, lest he himself should be a castaway.

What is the explanation of this? Two things explain

it. One is this: when we first gave ourselves to God, then, as in all the chief steps of our course, we only knew very partially what we did. Like James and John, we said in reply to our Lord's question of personal service, "We can;" but we little knew,—only experience *could* teach us,—all that a life-long, heart-deep service meant. We have found out since, what victories on victories it involved. But we were sincere to the full measure of our knowledge, and our sincerity was accepted, and God has led us on and made us to know that His service means struggle and endeavour, victory and glory after battle and endurance.

The other truth is this, that God is sanctifying us, having regard to our own individual characteristics, and paying respect to these. He is *so* working within us that each one of His children matures according to his own special personal constitution and circumstances. There is not to be monotony in Christian excellence: there is to be some colour in Christian character; there is to be the play of individual temperament and disposition. One man will develop this grace, another that. God will not be dwelling in the soul in such wise that the man himself will be no more or little more than a mere instrument or organ. God's Spirit is present and powerful in such a way that the image of Christ is formed while the mental and moral peculiarities of the individual soul are retained. Hence we shall have every variety of Christian worth. One good man will not use just the same vocabulary and speak in just the same strain as another. One man will show his devotedness along one line, in one department of human action, and another man in a different one. Sanctification, holiness, is the development, the gradual formation in us, of the character of the Holy Son of God; a work wrought in each soul in a way peculiar to itself; a work which is very largely indeed the direct pro-

duction of the Spirit of God, but which is also the outcome and result of manifold means of spiritual good, and which takes shape and form and colour from the particular bent and attitude and constitution of the human spirit who is being sanctified.

I have necessarily anticipated the other main point of this discourse on holiness, viz.,

II. *The path to its possession.*

I have already indicated that this is not to be a short, swift flight from the lowlands of unworthiness to cloudland of evangelical mysticism, but rather a good long persevering climb to the high table-land of spiritual excellency. A climb, not unhappy, not unrewarded; nay, rather accompanied with many refreshing views, pleasant and even delightful to a living soul. Speaking generally, I should say that the path to the attainment of a higher life is that of *a free and full resort to all those sources of sanctity* which are the rich legacy of the work of our Divine Saviour.

Holiness, we are told, is to be obtained by faith. Yes, I reply, by faith, if you take that word in all its meaning. Not the faith which by one act appropriates the blessing, and receives in an hour, in an instant, all the fulness of the heritage; but the faith which accepts and applies the work and the word of Christ day by day, year after year, through all the life.

By faith we believe that the Scriptures are the very word of God, that the records we have in our New Testament give us the very words of Christ, the very writings of His apostles; these, in faith, we read, so taking into our minds the very thoughts, into our hearts the very feelings of the Holy One, and *so* are sanctified—"sanctified through the truth."

By faith we realize the presence of our Divine Father, the nearness of our Lord Jesus Christ, His observance of

our heart and life, His acceptance of our love and our submission; and we “stand before God,” we walk and live in the conscious presence of the holy Lord and Saviour, and *so* are sanctified—sanctified by faith in His “presence with us always.”

By faith we believe that our Maker and our Redeemer and our Sanctifier are ever waiting to receive our worship, our adoration; ever waiting for our spiritual approach, and we go to Him in praise, in prayer, in devout communion, and *so* are sanctified—sanctified by an elevating intercourse, a hallowing fellowship with our holy Heavenly Friend.

By faith we apprehend that God reveals Himself to our hearts, peculiarly, as a Holy Spirit whose unperceived but powerful impulses quicken the soul, kindling its love, restraining its passion, heightening its hopes, and we lift our heart in believing prayer that God will come to us, that Christ will come to us, and enter our heart and abide with us, making us His temple, His dwelling-place, and *so* are sanctified—sanctified by the indwelling, the renewing Spirit of our God.

By faith, a living faith, a lasting faith, a faith which through years of service and of struggle, of love and of joy, appropriates the promises and applies the truths of God to the aspiring and endeavouring human soul, are we made holy.

Is this all? No! it is not all; it is much, but it is not *all*.

By watchfulness, by taking heed unto our way, by examining our own heart, by “keeping our heart with all diligence,”—or, as it is literally and strikingly, “beyond all keeping,”—by careful avoidance of those things which however harmless to others, we know to be dangerous to us, by conscientious regulation of our bodily wants and cravings, by shunning that society in which we find

ourselves injured and our life depressed, in a word, by practical Christian wisdom, are we kept from evil and thus drawn to God, and *so* are sanctified.

By work, by kindly usefulness, by loving sympathy, by weeping with them that weep and rejoicing with them that do rejoice, by encouraging the meek, by instructing the ignorant, by raising the fallen, by communicating truth, bounty, blessing, to them that are in need; by giving freely of that store which we have so freely received, by every form of sympathy and succour, we are made more like the generous and holy Giver of Himself, and *so* are sanctified.

And if last, yet surely not least—

By God's discipline, His *daily* discipline in our homes and in our business and when among our friends, in all our various relations, and by His *special* discipline when He visits us with sorrow and trouble, when He sends chastisement in Fatherly love, when He makes our feet to pass through dark shadows, our head to be bowed under stormy heavens, our soul to be burdened with a great weight of grief, when thus He comes to us and lays His hand upon us, and calls us to closer communion, to nearer following, to heartier service, then are we purified in spirit, then are we led to look more to the things which are unseen and eternal, and *so* are sanctified.

Thus are we led upwards. From the spot of earliest conviction and aspiration and resolution, through struggle and endeavour, through failure and disappointment, through victory and thanksgiving, along paths of prayerfulness and praise, through fields of activity and enterprise—by the exercise of every kind of Christian virtue gladdening and strengthening the soul, we rise to higher things; we reach advanced truth, a firmer faith, a deeper peace, a serener joy, a brighter hope; we pursue a more useful course; we attain to a more steadfast character; we

show more of the spirit of Christ in everything which tries and proves us; and, "after the pattern of that Holy One who hath called us, we become holy in all manner of conversation."

This I believe to be the holiness which IS scriptural, and this the way which Scripture sanctions for its attainment. I believe that those who imagine that anything like perfection or completeness of Christian character is to be attained suddenly and by a leap, in answer to faith, will find themselves mistaken, and, like men that essay to fly when they are not God-provided with wings, they will come to the ground and be bruised by the fall. I am also seriously apprehensive lest a large number of Christian men, catching up and employing the passwords and peculiarities of phrasology of these new teachers, will vainly suppose themselves to be possessed of a higher life when they have only acquired another language; and the end of that delusion can only be evil. We may depend on it that any theory, however productive of present brilliant consequences, which is not based on the Bible,—taken, not in part, but as a whole, read, not in the letter, but in the spirit,—will, in the end, be injurious in its working. And when I go to the great Teacher to learn of Him, and read through the letters of His inspired Apostles, and when I consult the experience and history of the Church, I conclude that sanctity of heart, that height of Christian life, is only to be attained by freely, patiently, persistently, employing *all* those sources of spiritual benefit which the Divine Father and Saviour and Disposer of all has placed within our reach.

Meantime is there not something to be gained from this movement? Yes; much, I reply. We have, if we are Christ's, consecrated ourselves to Him; but we need again and again to re-consecrate ourselves, body and spirit, to His service, to renew our vows unto our Lord.

By all means let us so do, not formally, but with deepest sincerity, at home, in the sanctuary, at the table of the Lord.

We need to be urged to take a lofty view of our possible attainments now and here. By all means let us correct our thought, if it has been low and narrow; let us raise our ambition, and aspire and endeavour after the heights of holiness which rise high and far beyond our present standing-place. Above all, we need to learn that there is great help to be gained direct from God in our upward course, far greater than most of us have yet availed ourselves of. We have not been taking hold of His strength as we might have done. There is a fountain of blessed power on which to draw, and we come to it far too infrequently. God's spirit is amongst us, is brooding over us, is ready to renew, to refresh, to purify, to ennoble us. Let us be more believing and so more prayerful and expectant, and so richer than we have been in heavenly influence and elevating power. Our hearts *might* be holier than they are; our lives *might* be higher. Let us watch, let us work, let us believe, as, even amid the distractions and the doubts of the present time, we might and should; let us realize that the purchase of our Saviour's work is a very ample and inexhaustible treasure of grace and life, which is ours to partake of, and we shall be more of what Christ looks to see us, and do more of the work He is expecting of us; our souls will bear more of His likeness, and our lives will be worthier and nobler, with more beauty dwelling in them and more blessing flowing from them, than in the years which are gone.

W. CLARKSON, B.A.

Salisbury.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Psalms.

Our Purpose.—Many learned and devout men have gone *philologically* through this **TEHELIM**, this book of Hebrew hymns, and have left us the rich results of their inquiries in volumes within the reach of every Biblical student. To do the mere verbal *hermeneutics* of this book, even as well as it has been done, would be to contribute nothing fresh in the way of evoking or enforcing its Divine ideas. A thorough **HOMILETIC** treatment it has never yet received, and to this work we here commit ourselves, determining to employ the best results of modern Biblical scholarship.

Our Method.—Our plan of treatment will comprise four sections:—(1) The **HISTORY** of the passage. Lyric poetry, which the book is, is a delineation of living character; and the key, therefore, to unlock the meaning and reach the spirit of the words is a knowledge of the men and circumstances that the poet sketches with his lyric pencil.—(2) **ANNOTATIONS** of the passage. This will include short explanatory notes on any ambiguous word, phrase, or allusion that may occur.—(3) The **ARGUMENT** of the passage. A knowledge of the main drift of an author is among the most essential conditions for interpreting his meaning.—(4) The **HOMILETICS** of the passage. This is our main work. We shall endeavour so to group the Divine ideas that have been legitimately deduced, as to suggest such thoughts, and indicate such sermonizing methods, as may promote the proficiency of modern pulpit ministrations.

Subject: A Portrait of a Genuine Penitent.

(Continued from page 268.)

HISTORY.—See page 263.

ANNOTATIONS.—See page 263.

ARGUMENT.—See page 266.

HOMILETICS.—We have said that this psalm contains two subjects: favours which a penitent implores, and arguments which a penitent employs.

I. **FAVOURS WHICH A PENITENT IMploRES.** He cries to Heaven.

First: *For deliverance from sin.* This we have dwelt upon already. (See page 266.)

He cries to Heaven,—

Secondly: *For moral restoration.* What does he desire to have restored? (1) Lost joy. “Make me to hear joy and gladness.” Prior to this awful sin, David was buoyant in soul and happy in his thoughts, affections, and aims. His conscience was at peace in him, he had a sense of the approbation of his Maker. But that is gone. He is miserable; a sense of guilt like a worm is gnawing within him, like a fire in the

centre of his being. (2) *Lost health.* "The bones which Thou hast broken." How sin prostrates all our powers, both physical, intellectual, and moral, unmans us, burns and steals the *vis* of manhood away. A good conscience re-invigorates the man. (3) *Lost purity.* "Create in me a clean heart, O God." The heart is the centre of our moral being, the fountain of our activities. Out of it are the issues of life. Sin has defiled this heart, blackened it with depravity, so that it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." The penitent prays for its restoration: "Create in me a clean heart." (4) *Lost steadfastness.* "Renew a right spirit within me." Margin, "a constant spirit." Sin unsettles the spirit, distracts it, makes it capricious, fickle, changing as the wind, unstable as water. The penitent here prays for steadfastness to be rooted and grounded in the right.

He cries to Heaven,—

Thirdly: For *spiritual preservation.* "Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." He felt that he was not entirely rejected, God had not as yet thrown him off. He had not withdrawn from him His Spirit, as He withdrew all light from Saul, all strength from Samson; but deeply did he feel the danger of such a loss, and intensely does he deprecate it. Oh, if God casts us off, if He withdraws His Spirit from us, if He ceases to "uphold" us, what becomes of us? Ah, what? Detach us from God, and we become like planets cut from their centre, we rush into darkness and confusion truly. "Hold Thou us up, and we shall be safe."

He cries to Heaven,—

Fourthly: For *religious prosperity.* "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion, and build Thou the walls of Jerusalem." To pray for Jerusalem, means to pray for the prosperity of religion in the country. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love Thee." "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence and give Him no rest till He establish and till He make Jerusalem a praise on the earth." Two remarks are suggested here. (1) That human rulers

should be specially desirous for the promotion of religion in their country. David was a king ; and the advancement of pure religion in his country was a subject in which he felt deep concern. Whilst all men, even in their private capacity, should earnestly seek the extension of the true religion, and should join in the prayer, “ Let the people praise Thee, O Lord,” etc., “ Thy kingdom come,” etc., kings should be specially earnestly concerned in the matter. The more religion in a country, the more all wholesome laws are obeyed, the firmer the social order is preserved. (2) That the promotion of spiritual religion in a country can alone render the religious ceremonies of a people acceptable to God. Where a people’s heart is filled with Divine gratitude, there God will be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness. But where this gratitude exists not, all sacrifices are an abomination. No offering to God, however costly, is acceptable to Him until the offerer has presented first himself as a living sacrifice.

Such are the favours which this penitent implores, and every genuine penitent prays for the same—deliverance from sin, moral restoration, spiritual preservation, and religious prosperity.

II. THE ARGUMENTS WHICH A PENITENT EMPLOYS. What are his pleas ? What are the grounds on which this penitent bases his entreaties ?

First : The *mercy of God*. “ Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness ; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies.” Deeply as he had sunk in sin, he had not as yet lost faith in the freeness and fulness of Divine mercy. It was mercy he needed ; justice would scathe him, power would crush him. He was miserable, and he felt that his misery was deserved. Hence mercy was his only hope.

“ ’Tis mercy, mercy, I implore,
I would Thy pity move ;
Thy grace is an exhaustless store,
And Thou Thyself art love.”

He bases his entreaties on,—

Secondly : His *personal confession*. “ For I acknowledge

my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Whilst he would not consider confession as giving a claim to the favour of God, he knew it was a condition of forgiveness. He who does not confess his sins with a broken, penitent, contrite heart has no reason to hope for absolution. It is sin, not its consequences, that he deploras. Genuine penitence is not so alarmed at hell as at iniquity. Sin is the abominable thing.

He bases his entreaties on,—

Thirdly : *The necessity of inward purity.* "Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts ; and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Observe here (1) That genuine religion has its seat in the soul. "The inward parts." It is not in language, however scriptural ; not in services, however unexceptionable in their external character. It is something in the "inward parts." It is supreme love for the supremely good. (2) That genuine religion is a reality. "Truth in the inward parts." It is not a passing sentiment, or a flitting thought, but a *reality*,—not a fiction, but a force, a living force. It is an "incorruptible seed," not a withering plant, a fixed star, not a flying meteor. The only real thing in human character is religion. (3) That genuine religion is what God requires. "Thou desirest truth." "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." The great object of the Divine desire in relation to man, is "truth in the inward parts," *moral reality*. (4) That genuine religion is Divinely imparted. "In the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights," etc. God alone can teach the heart.

He bases his entreaties on,—

Fourthly : His *determination to be useful.* "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways ; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee." Should he have what he sought, he promises to devote himself to spiritual useful-

ness. Learn from this passage, (1) That the conversion of sinners is a work pleasing to God. This penitent thought so, otherwise why did he make this plea? We know that it is so. Like the father of the prodigal of old, God is delighted at the return of sinners, He rejoices over them. (2) That the conversion of sinners requires moral instruction, "Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways." Sinners must be instructed as to their moral condition, as to the claims of God, as to the love of Christ, as to the importance of salvation. (3) That moral instruction can only be imparted by those who have been restored to the Divine favour. "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit, *then* will I teach transgressors Thy ways." As a rule the converted alone can convert. He who is in closest alliance with the Divine will be the most qualified effectively to teach transgressors their ways.

He bases his entreaties on,—

Fifthly: The *Divine acceptance of genuine contrition*. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Perowne observes on this verse, that, "When speaking of thankfulness, we might have expected him to say, a joyful heart, or a thankful heart; but, instead of that, he says, a contrite heart. For the joy of forgiveness does not banish sorrow and contrition for sin; this will still continue; and the deeper the sense of sin and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart is therefore the best thank-offering."

CONCLUSION.—Learn from this psalm,—

First: The grand *curse* of humanity. What is that? Sin. What inexpressible agony this sin of David carried into his heart. What darkness, what tempests, what pangs, what horrors, what inward convulsions. If one sin could do all this, what will not the sins of a life effect? Sin is the accursed thing. It is the poison in his cup; it is the virus in his veins; it is that which has brought death into the world and all our woe. It is loathsomeness in itself. "It is not every

unclean thing," says Trench, "that offends the sight; while the slightest stain upon some things will excite in us deep dislike : the feeling depends entirely upon the nature of the thing and the purpose to which it is applied. We pass by an unclean stone unnoticed ; it is unconscious of its state, and meant to be trampled under foot. But rising a step higher in the scale of creation, to an unclean plant, we become conscious of a slight emotion of dislike ; because we see that which might have pleased the eye and have beautified a spot in the creation disfigured and useless. An unclean animal creates our dislike still more, for, instead of proving useful in any way, it is merely a moving pollution. But an unclean human being excites our loathing more than all ; it presents our nature in a light so disgusting that it lessens our pity for him if he be miserable, and excites in us ideas of disease, contamination, and pain. But an unclean spirit—it is loathsome above all things ; it is the soul and essence of pollution, it is the most unclean animal in the universe, it is the spectacle which excites the deep dislike of God Himself. His dislike of it is the more intense, because originally it was pure, and capable of making perpetual advances towards Divine perfection ; whereas it now presents itself to His eye robbed of all its purity and defiled in all its powers, a fountain of pollution."

Learn,—

Secondly : The grand *work* of humanity. What is that ? To get rid of sin, to get it washed away, to get it thoroughly eradicated from the human soul. To this work all the energies of men should be concentrated and directed. For this Christ came into the world and died. He "came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." For this every man should labour with intense and unremitting labour.

Homiletic Sketches on the Book of Job.

The Book of Job is one of the grandest sections of Divine Scripture. It has never yet, to our knowledge, been treated in a purely Homiletic method for Homiletic ends. Besides many learned expositions on the book found in our general commentaries, we have special exegetical volumes of good scholarly and critical worth; such as Drs. Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes Lee, Delitzsch, and Herman Hedwick Bernard; the last is in every way a masterly production. For us, therefore, to go into philology and verbal criticism, when such admirable works are available to all students, would be superfluous, if not presumption. Ambiguous terms, when they occur, we shall of course explain, and occasionally suggest an improved rendering; but our work will be chiefly, if not entirely, Homiletic. We shall essay to bring out from the grand old words those Divine verities which are true and vital to man as man in all lands and ages. These truths we shall frame in an order as philosophic and suggestive as our best powers will enable us to do; and this in order to help the earnest preachers of God's Holy Word.

Subject: A Solemn Asseveration, A Noble Determination, and a Weighty Reflection.

"Moreover Job continued his parable, and said," etc.—JOB xxvii. 1-10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—One might have expected that Zophar would have spoken next. Indeed Wemyss asserts that he did, and that this whole chapter is his utterance; but by general consent Job now commences a speech which he continues to the close of chapter xxxi. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar have retired from the field of controversy and return no more.

Ver. 1.—"*Moreover, Job continued his parable, and said.*" Though the word parable properly denotes a comparison, it is used here and elsewhere to denote a sententious discourse; and the words may be rendered: "Job took up again his impressive discourse, and said."

Ver. 2.—"*As God liveth.*" A form of solemn adjuration, and means, as certainly as God liveth. "*Hath taken away my judgment.*" This means perhaps, who hath rejected my cause. "*And the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul.*" Margin, made my soul bitter.

Ver. 3.—"*All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils.*" This means, as long as I live and the Spirit of God sustains me.

Ver. 4.—"*My lips shall not speak wickedness nor my tongue utter deceit.*" He means to say, as certainly as God Almighty liveth, he would not vindicate wickedness, or deal in sophistry. As if he had said, "If I were to confess myself a guilty man and a sinner, my lips would speak iniquity, which they never shall."

Ver. 5.—"*God forbid that I should justify you.*" This means, Far be it from me to admit the accuracy of your charges against me. I cannot concede that I am a great sinner because I am a great sufferer. He was conscious of his integrity. "*Till I die I will not remove mine*

integrity from me." I will not, I cannot admit that I have been insincere or hypocritical. With my last breath I will maintain my sincerity.

Ver. 6.—"*My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*" I cleave to my righteousness and firmly maintain it has ever been with me and never for a moment left me. I have never acted the hypocrite, I have lost much—property, health, friends, etc., but I have never lost my sincerity.

Ver. 7.—"*Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*" This is probably said that he might show that it was not his intention to justify the wicked, and that in all he had said it was no part of his purpose to express approbation of their course. His friends had charged him with this; but he now solemnly disclaims it, and says that he had no such design. To show how little he meant to justify the wicked, he says that the utmost he could desire for an enemy would be that he would be treated as he believed the wicked would be. "Although I have spoken of the prosperity of the wicked, do not suppose that I envy them. In all my wretchedness I would not exchange my position for theirs. Yea, if I had an enemy, the worst thing I could wish for him would be that he should have the moral wretchedness of the wicked man."

Ver. 8.—"*For what is the hope of the hypocrite.*" The hypocrite, or the wicked man, may have, and often has, great gain it is true; but what is the worth of his hope? "*Though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul.*" When he dies, where is his hope?

Ver. 9, 10.—"*Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?*" Dr. Bernard seems to me to express the idea of Job here. "Can he delight himself in the Almighty? Can he call on God at all times, as I do? Almost intolerable as are my sufferings, I have yet this great consolation, that I can call upon God and with confidence declare to Him my readiness to appear at any time before His judgment seat for the purpose of clearing myself of any charge that may be brought against me, and of fully proving my innocence. Can the wicked man, can the iniquitous man do this? How absurd, then, would it be of you to suppose for one moment that I envy their lot."

HOMILETICS.—We have in these verses three subjects for useful thought.

I. A SOLEMN ASSEVERATION. "As God liveth." The words imply a belief,—

First: In the *reality* of the Divine existence. "As God liveth." He lives, this is a fact incontrovertible, eternal, fundamental. This fact lies at the foundation of all facts, gives meaning, harmony, unity, to all facts. The man who denies

this fact lives in the realm of phantasies and fancies ; the man who ignores it is unconscious of the inspiration of true life. “As God liveth.” Whilst some deny the fact, the bulk of the race practically ignore it—they are without God in the world. The words imply a belief,—

Secondly : In the *awfulness* of the Divine existence. There is a sublime awfulness in the words “As God liveth.” Of all solemn facts in the universe, the most solemn is this, “God liveth.” He who looks into all hearts, loathes all depravities, supports all existence, and who will in no wise clear the guilty, “He liveth.” All souls may well stand in trembling awe in the presence of this fact. “How dreadful is this place!” Yes, the place where He is, is dreadful ; but the fact that He is, is more dreadful still. “The Lord is in His holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

The words imply a belief,—

Thirdly : In the *severity* of the Divine existence. “Who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty who hath vexed my soul.” As nature has winter as well as summer, so God has a severe as well as a benign aspect.

Fourthly : In the *nearness* of the Divine existence. “The spirit of God is in my nostrils. His breath is my life.” “He is not far from every one of us.” “In Him we live and move and have our being.”

Oh that men would practically recognise this fact ! that God is real, awful, and so near to all. “He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him.”

We have in these verses,—

II. A NOBLE DETERMINATION. “My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you, till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me ; my righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go ; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” What does he determine ?

First : Never to *swerve from rectitude*. “Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me ; my righteousness I hold

fast and will not let it go." Whatever happens to me I will not play the false, I will not be insincere. I will be real, I will be faithful to my conscience ; my righteousness I will hold fast. I could not hold my property, it is gone ; nor my children, they have been taken from me ; nor my health, it has departed ; nor my friends, for they have failed me ; nor my reputation, slander has stolen it away ; but my righteousness I hold fast. No one can rob me of my integrity, or destroy the consciousness that I am sincere. Alas ! many have no righteousness to hold ; and some who have it hold it with a feeble grasp, and will give it up for some tempting offer. But to have it and to hold it, this is truly noble ; to hold it as a drowning man holds a rope thrown out for his rescue, holds it amidst the furious winds and dashing billows. Thank God ! we can hold it if we have it ; no power in the universe can take it away without our consent.

He determines,—

Secondly : Never to *vindicate wickedness*. " Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous," etc.

Job has so many times alluded to the prosperity of the wicked that he is apprehensive he may be suspected of envying their lot, and of wishing to be in their place—a suspicion in the highest degree offensive to him. In order therefore to prevent his friends from entertaining any such erroneous notions, he says : " Let mine enemy be as the wicked man, and mine adversary as the iniquitous man. So far from envying the wicked on account of their success and prosperity, I would not for the world exchange my condition, miserable and wretched as it is, for theirs, well knowing that the stings of my conscience would be infinitely more painful than these sores with which I am covered from the sole of my foot to the crown of my head."

Great is the tendency of some men to vindicate wickedness in connection with wealth and worldly power. Intemperance, debauchery, gambling, laziness, haughtiness, a " fast life ;" these, in what are called the nobilities and royalties, are very

venial evils, if indeed evils at all. Let us catch the inspiration of this old Arabian, and determine never to vindicate wickedness even in connection with worldly greatness ; to damn it everywhere.

III. A WEIGHTY REFLECTION. “What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul ? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him ?”

The writer reflects here upon the wicked men of wealth, and he concludes—

First : That in *death* they will have no *hope*. “What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul ?” The “soul” here means life ; and death is God taking away the life. A man dies, not by accident, age, or disease, but because God hath taken away the life. “The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away.” But what hope has a wicked man at this period ? None. It might have flickered up to this moment, but the cold chill of death puts it out for ever, and his soul is enshrouded in a starless despair.

Secondly : That in *trouble* they will have no *answer to their prayers* or *delight* in God. “Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him ? Will he delight himself in the Almighty ? will he always call on God ?” Trouble will come upon him—that is destiny ; he will cry to God when in trouble—that is instinct. But will he be answered ? The interrogative means, no. He will not hear his “cry.” “He will laugh at their calamities, and mock when their fear cometh.” A good man delights in God ; but God to a wicked man is terrific and repugnant.

CONCLUSION.—Learn,—

First : The greatest *reality outside* of us. What is that ? God. All else is shadow. He is a substance. Realize this ; set the Lord always before you.

Secondly : The greatest *worth inside* of us. What is that ? Virtue, or what is here called “integrity,” “righteousness.” This is more valuable to a man than kingdoms or riches of the world. With this, he has hope in death and joy in God for evermore.

Sermonic Glances at the Gospel of St. John.

As our purpose in the treatment of this Gospel is purely the development, in the briefest and most suggestive form, of Sermonic outlines, we must refer our readers to the following works for all critical inquiries into the author and authorship of the book, and also for any minute criticisms on difficult clauses. The works we shall especially consult are :—"Introduction to New Testament," by Bleek ; "Commentary on John," by Tholuck ; "Commentary on John," by Hengstenberg ; "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels," by Westcott ; "The Gospel History," by Ebrard ; "Our Lord's Divinity," by Liddon ; "St. John's Gospel," by Oosterzee ; "Doctrine of the Person of Christ," by Dorner ; Lange ; etc. etc.

Subject: Christ and Men.

"Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins : whither I go, ye cannot come."—JOHN viii. 21.

EXPOSITION : Ver. 21 — "*And shall die in your sins.*" ἐν τῇ ἀμαρτίᾳ ὑμῶν.

It should be "in your sin." It does not mean, you shall die *for* your sins, but in your sin, in your moral guiltiness. "If they persisted in their unbelief and rejection of Him, they could have no salvation, they must die in their sin, because they rejected the one Saviour from the power and curse of sin."

HOMILETICS.—There are three things here worthy of attention.

I. THE WITHDRAWMENT OF CHRIST FROM MEN.

First : Christ had *a way*. "My way." By His "way" He undoubtedly means His way through the Cross up to His Father's presence and His native heavens. As if He had said, I have a way clearly defined, though rugged and torturing in some parts. In that way I go, in it I shall not pause, and from it I shall not swerve. What a "way" was His ! It will be the study of eternity.

Secondly : Christ pursued His "way" *voluntarily*. "I go." You cannot force Me. I am not the victim of coercion, I am free. (1) The voluntariness of Christ's death is no extenuation of the guilt of His murderers." The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom He is

betrayed." (2) The voluntariness of Christ's death is the glory of His history. Why has Christ's death the power, not only to save humanity, but to thrill and charm the universe? Because it was *free*. "I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it up again."

A more terrible calamity cannot happen to men, than the withdrawal of Christ from their midst. A greater calamity far than if the sun were to withdraw from the heavens, and leave them in sackcloth. There is a sense in which Christ withdraws from impenitent men now. Another thing here worthy of attention is,—

II. THE FRUITLESS SEEKING OF CHRIST BY MEN. "Ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins." This is a repetition of what Jesus had before said in the previous chapter. "Ye shall seek me but shall not find me." When I am gone, and the judgments of heaven will descend on your country, you will be seeking me, but you will not find me; you will have filled up the measure of your iniquity, the things that belong to your peace will be hid from your eyes.

First: The fruitless seeking is *possible*. There is a *fruitless* seeking for Christ. The day of grace closes with some men even while they are in the world. In the judgment He will be earnestly sought, but shall not be found. "Many shall say unto me on that day," etc., etc.

Secondly: This fruitless seeking is *lamentable*. "Ye shall die in your sins." Sin is like quicksand, the man who walks on it must ultimately sink and be lost. "It sometimes happens on the coast of Britain or Scotland that a person walking on the sand will suddenly find a difficulty in walking. The shore is like pitch, to which the soles of his feet cling. The coast appears perfectly dry, but the footprints that he leaves are immediately filled with water. Nothing distinguishes the sand which is solid from that which is not. He passes on, unaware of his danger. Suddenly he sinks. He looks at his feet: the sand covers them. He wishes to turn back, but with every effort sinks more deeply. With indescribable terror he finds he is involved in a quicksand. He throws

down his burden ; but it is already too late. The slow burial of hours continues ; the sand reaches to his waist, to his chest, to his neck ; now only his face is visible. He cries ; the sand fills his mouth, and all is silent." What a striking emblem of the danger of sin ! Another thing worthy of attention here is,—

III. THE ETERNAL SEPARATION OF CHRIST FROM MEN. "Whither I go ye cannot come." The separation will be complete and irreversible. "Ye *cannot* come." Christ had said this before (vii. 34), and He refers to it again (xiii. 33). So that to Him the words had a terrible meaning. More terrible words than these could not be sounded in human ears, "Ye cannot come." It means incorrigible depravity, hopeless misery. Separation from Christ is hell. The commission of every sin contributes to the construction of the impassable gulf.

Germs of Thought.

Subject: The Voice from Heaven.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them."
—REV. xiv. 13.

HOW much light dwells in this familiar sentence ! How many truths gleam from it—gleam with all the varied beauty of the stones in the breast-plate of the Hebrew priest of old ! We have here :—

I. THE DIVINE CARE FOR THE BEREAVED. "I heard a voice from heaven" . . . "Saith the Spirit." The Apostle was evidently thinking—a vision was passing before him that made the thought very vivid, of the persecution of the martyrs even unto death, and of the terrible havoc that the sharp sickle of death would work through the ages. While he is thinking of

the death that would thus befall men, he is led to contemplate the voice and the writing of consolation. These come from heaven. Heaven cares for earth in its bitterest experiences. The Bible is full of this doctrine. So we often rightly sing Faber's lines—

“ There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven.”

Every time the earth is torn for a new grave, the heavens, though they often seem to be cold and still, are not impassive. There is “a voice from heaven;” there is a message for mourners from the skies. There is trouble down here, but there is sympathy up there. There is the fatherly care of God, the brotherly care of Christ, and the consoling care of the Comforter. So, when there is bereavement, it is not only that human lips are ready with their utterances of kindness. Many of us have had good reason for thanking God for such human voices. But there is a Divine voice as well. In the time of bereavement it is not only that human letters charged with tenderness and sympathy reach us in our woe; but there is a Divine handwriting often almost invisible, and perhaps never rightly read, except in the firelight of affliction. Why is the message for mourners to be written? “Write”—that the message may come softly and with tender silence. “Write”—that the message may come where grief secludes itself. “Write”—that though human voices grow old and become still in death, it may come perpetually. The message from Heaven is, moreover, affirmed and emphasized by the Spirit of Truth, who reveals to men's minds what the human eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived. Here we have :—

II. A DIVINE REVELATION ABOUT THE HOLY DEAD. Mary's cry about her Lord, and our Lord, is more common than we may imagine. We are often really saying to the earth, to the elements, to the winds, about our departed beloved or great ones, “If ye have borne him away, tell me where ye have laid him.” Where are our dead? What are they doing? What are they feeling? Earth can but echo our cry; only Heaven

can answer it. The researches of science, the dreams of poets, the theories of philosophers, do not satisfy us about the dead. We want a revelation ; we want an unfolding of the real, the actual, the fact. We are not left to our speculations, not left to believe only that our yearnings and our instincts must be fulfilled ; but there is a definite and accurate revelation about the holy dead. Here we have :—

III. THE SACRED RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOLY DEAD. They “die in the Lord.” They die, not merely believing in His teaching, not merely breathing His Spirit, but they die sustained by His grace, and preserved by His power. The fellowship that Christly men had with Christ in their lifetime, is not weakened or shaken by any of the mysterious experiences of death. Death rather intensifies and completes it. Here we have :—

IV. THE CELESTIAL BLESSEDNESS OF THE HOLY DEAD. That close relationship with Christ, in dying, has led to this fuller development of their blessedness. “Blessed are the dead.” They are not to be thought of as those who have been overborne by some great adversary, and trampled down by some resistless foe. They are to be regarded as conquerors. That “rest !” What can it mean ? It does not mean evidently that they are gone out of being ; for non-existence is not rest. A limb that is dead cannot be said to be a limb that is resting. A man utterly dead could not be said to be a man resting. The grave is not the end even of physical existence, if the body is only resting in the grave. On the tombstone of a Christly man truth has cut in clear letters : “The inn of a traveller on his way to Jerusalem ;” for, though the confined, buried, “flesh shall see corruption,” it is triumphantly predicted, “This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality.”

Still less is death the end of the spirit-life. It is resting, not annihilated—resting, for it has returned to God who gave it. This repose is not a lapsing into some stagnant, weird inactivity. For it is equally true of those who are said to rest from their labours that “they rest not day nor night.” The Saviour is

said to have gone into His Sabbath rest when He ascended into heaven, and the Eternal God rested at the Creation. These words could not mean that the Saviour ceased to think—ceased to feel—ceased to work ; or, that the Infinite God stayed the outflow of eternal power and love. They indicate, surely, the fulness of life—the harmony of life—the complete satisfaction of life. They who have gone to heaven partake of this rest—the rest of Christ—the rest of God. You remember the striking simile used by Robertson of Brighton, when he tells us that “ the symbols in the world of nature of this rest, are not the lake locked in ice, but the strong river moving on calmly and rapidly in silent majesty and strength,—not the cattle lying in the sun, but the eagle cleaving the air with fixed pinions, and giving you the idea of repose combined with strength and motion.” Besides these elements of rest, is there not in God and in Christ, and in the redeemed, as the very essence of rest, an utter self-forgetfulness. That is at the heart of true restfulness. When the Saviour was on earth, He said He would give rest ; and to weary men He gives rest now. “ Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” His gift of rest is the bestowal, even on earth, of the spirit of reconciliation and harmony, of self-forgetfulness and love. In heaven, they who see Him clearly, and resemble Him completely, must have rest, for they fully know, and are fully like Him who is the Centre of Rest—the Source of Rest—the King of Rest. Here we have,—

V. THE UNDYING INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY DEAD. It has been suggested by some exegetes that the expression about their “ works ” ought to be rendered “ their works follow with them.” All their labour is over with their life. But ordinary observation and experience, and all history and many scriptures, teach us that the results of the works of the holy dead follow them long after they have passed away, so that we may readily accept the more common and evident interpretation of this phrase. Thus we are led to recollect about noble and devoted ones who have left us in these lower regions of service and labour, that what they began to do will continue to

be done even as the result of their own efforts. Dear to them was many a project and plan born of love to Christ ; very dear some endeavours into which, in loving fellowship with others, they threw unreservedly their strength of body, and intellect, and heart. For their sake, as well as for our own and for Christ's, we rejoice to know that the seed they buried will spring up in rich harvests, that the sacred tones of their teachings will swell into growing harmonies—that the forces they set at work, however subtle and silent, will widen in influence and develop and multiply till myriads are affected by the life-work of one man. In truth, the many generations that are gone have more power over this world to-day than this one generation now living here. There have been individual men, now dead, who have probably had more power over our experiences and our circumstances to-day, than one half of the living generation could have. Our libraries, our sanctuaries, our political institutions, our civilization, our religion, are all monuments of the mightiness of posthumous influence. Lasting power for good is here described as the legacy to the world, not only of our reformers and authors and preachers, but of all whose Christly lives ended in a Christly death, and whose very death even, like their Lord's, was necessary to their deeper and wider and more sacred usefulness. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone : but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Bristol.

URIJAH R. THOMAS.

DEATH, A STREAM.

There is a stream whose narrow tide
The known and unknown worlds divide,
Where all must go.
Its waveless waters, dark and deep,
'Mid sullen silence downward sweep,
With noiseless flow.

The Preacher's Finger-Post.

Subject: GODLINESS IN ALL
CONDITIONS OF LIFE.

“Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”—1 COR. vii. 24.

The text teaches three things,—

I. THAT MEN ARE FOUND IN VARIOUS CONDITIONS OF LIFE. This is too obvious for either proof or illustration; some are rich, some are poor, some are free men, some are slaves, some are masters, some are servants. The variety in human conditions is useful in many ways. (1) It affords scope for benevolent activity. The exercise of benevolence is the essence of virtue, and necessary to the well-being of moral intelligences. But if all men were in precisely identical worldly conditions, there would be manifestly no sphere for the play of benevolence. (2) It creates a bond of social unity. *Gratitude* is one of the strongest social ties, and hence the relation between the benefactor and the beneficiary, between the giver and the receiver, the helper and the helped, is generally close, tender and strong. Were all men in exactly the same condition, there would be, with their present depravity, a spirit of reckless independency, and a state of social anarchy and disorder. (3)

It invests society with social charms. Variety is one of the charms of existence; souls have an instinctive craving for it; in nature there is ample provision for it. But if all men were found here in exactly the same social condition, society would be utterly destitute of its charm; to see one man, would be to see all. The whole social aspect would wear a somnific uniformity, and sound forth the echoes of a dull monotony.

The text teaches,—

II. THAT SOME OF THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE ARE OF DIVINE APPOINTMENT. “Wherein he is called,” *i.e.*, in that condition of life wherein he is placed. The Apostle’s primary reference in this chapter is to *marriage*. The Corinthians, it would seem, had, in their intercourse with the Apostle, put questions to depreciate conjugal life, and to suggest that it would be well to break off marriage with an unbeliever. From this condition he refers to other conditions of man. He passes away from the condition of the unmarried and the married to the condition of the circumcised and uncircumcised, to the condition of the freeman and the slave. He gives us to understand in this verse that to some of these conditions men

have been called. We say that there are *some* conditions to which men are Divinely appointed. There are many which cannot be so viewed; to do so would be blasphemy.

(1) People are found in *matrimonial relations* which God has not appointed. Two people are brought together for life whose instincts, temperaments, habits, are so antagonistic that the sooner they change the relationship the better. True marriage does not consist in the mutual repeating of a formula, the signing of a legal document, or the passing through a religious ceremony, but in temperamental affinities, mutual esteem, and reciprocal affection. (2) People are found in *ecclesiastical positions* which God has not appointed. For example, Did God ordain that there should be an order of men paid out of the public taxes from £1000 up to £15,000 a year, wearing high-sounding titles, living in palaces, mingling in the most fashionable society, set apart as the *special* representatives of Him who "made Himself of no reputation," who, when on earth, had "nowhere to lay His head," but spent His life in going about "doing good?" Heaven never called men into such an impious condition as this. (3) People are found in *commercial engagements* which God has not appointed. Those who turn the ores of the earth

into implements of destruction, and distil the fruits of the earth into liquids that drown the reason, ruin the health, and destroy the morals of a community, are not "called" to their sphere. But conditions that are *inevitable* are those to which men are called. There is inevitable *poverty*. There are men born into poverty who have neither the foresight, health, skill, nor aptitude to rise out of it. There is inevitable *servitude*. There are men who are constitutionally slaves, their natural temper is that of servility and submission.

The text teaches,—

III. That in EVERY CONDITION OF LIFE MEN SHOULD PRACTISE GODLINESS. "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." What is it to "abide with God"? It means constancy of supreme love to Him: this should rule in all. Constancy of obedience to Him: there should be no deviation from His laws. Constancy of devotion to His cause. (1) Godliness is *binding* in all conditions of life. In whatever condition of life you are placed, legitimate or illegitimate, happy or otherwise, you are bound to love and serve God. As much so in the fiercest bustle of the market, or the bloody encounters of the battle-field, as in the quiet chamber or the consecrated temple. God is every-

where, and your relation to Him remains intact in all circumstances, all engagements, and in all places. (2) Godliness is *possible* in all the *inevitable* conditions of life. Even those conditions of life that are incompatible with godliness should be renounced at once, and Heaven will grant the help to struggle out of the doomed Babylons. Let no man say that his conditions are such that he cannot be religious. God knows your circumstances and will help you.

CONCLUSION : Godliness, where it exists at all, exists as a life, a permeating, ruling life, everywhere and always in the ascendant, always "abiding," whatever the conditions. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God."

Subject : THE TWO CUPS OF LIFE ; OR, MORAL INCOMPATIBILITIES.

"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils."
—1 COR. x. 21.

"Ye cannot drink a cup of the Lord and a cup of demons."—*Dr. Davidson*. But demons being the menials and messengers of Satan, are devils. Detaching the words from the context, which will be elsewhere explained, the text suggests,—

I. THE MORAL INCOMPATIBILITIES IN LIFE. "The cup of the Lord, and the cup of

devils." Every man's life has the *two* cups. Out of one of these cups every man drinks, and by it he lives such a life as he has. What are these cups? (1) The one is the cup of *self-indulgence*, the other of *self-sacrificing love*. The devil's cup is full to the brim of selfish gratification. They who drink of it—and alas! the millions do—are absorbed with their own personal interests and pleasures. Christ's cup is that of self-denial. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (2) The one is the cup of *falsehood*, the other of *reality*. The devil's cup is full of fictions, phantasies, and vanities. False theories of religion, of happiness, of greatness, of life. Hence the millions who drink of it "walk in a vain show," their world is unreal and fictitious, they walk by appearances. Christ's cup is full of realities. "I am come," said Christ, "to bear witness of the truth,"—to reveal to men, not phenomena, but principles; not the forms, but the forces; not the semblance, but the spirit of existence. Those who drink of this cup are *real* men, real in thought, conviction, purpose, and life. They "quit themselves like men." (3) The one is the cup of *materialism*, the other of *spirituality*. In the cup of the devil everything is material—material pleasures, ma-

terial pursuits, material dignities. The men who drink of it feel there is nothing but matter. They not only live in the flesh but after the flesh and for the flesh. All is animalism. Their grand question is, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink?" In Christ's cup there is spirituality. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?" "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he hath in this world." The men who drink of this cup feel that the spirit is everything, they are "born of the spirit, are spirit," and live spiritually. (4) The one is the cup of *practical atheism*, the other the cup of *vital godliness*. In the cup of the devil there is no God, nothing but nature. The men who drink of it are without God in the world. God is not in all their thoughts. In Christ's cup God is the essence and spirit of its contents. "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." They who drink of this cup come under the consciousness of the fact that God is everything, not only the author, but the substance, spirit, and sovereign of the universe. Ever present, never absent, ever working, never idle; hence, like Enoch, they "walk with God." The text suggests,—

II. The STRONGEST TEMPTA-

TION IN LIFE. What is the temptation? It is to participate of *both* cups.

First: All men begin and most continue with the devil's cup. We "were by nature the children of wrath even as others." The cup is put into the hand of the child at the very dawn of moral agency, he imbibes it, takes a liking to it, until it gets the mastery over him.

Secondly: Some—and their number is ever increasing—renounce the devil's cup and adopt the cup of Christ. The Apostle is referring to these when he says "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

Thirdly: In both classes there is a desire to participate of both cups at the same time. Those who drink of the devil's cup are not morally satisfied, and hence they often desire if possible to participate of the other. They have a desire to be Christly and good, but they like the world and all the elements in the devil's cup too well. Hence they are everywhere dissatisfied. The devil's cup gives no moral satisfaction. On the other hand, many of those who drink of Christ's cup have frequently a strong desire to participate of the devil's cup. Hence the desire for self-indulgence, worldly pleasures and pur-

suits, etc., etc. Like the Jews in the wilderness, they have a hankering after the fleshpots of Egypt; like Lot's wife, they cast a lingering look upon the old scenes of Sodom.

Thus there is a temptation in all classes, both the good and the bad, the converted and the unconverted, to participate of the two cups at the same time.

The text suggests,—

III. THE ATTEMPTED IMPOSSIBILITY IN LIFE. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him: know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." Clear as daylight this. Ye cannot be selfish and benevolent, materialistic and spiritual, false and true, atheistic and godly, good and bad at the same time. Every man must be one or the other.

CONCLUSION: My unregenerate brother, drink no more of the devil's cup. It may be pleasant, but it is sapping your spiritual constitution, and stealing away your health. It may be delicious, but it will and must turn to poison.

Thrust it from you; fling it as you would a scorpion, with all the force of your being, away. Thousands have done so: not one who has done it has ever regretted the sacrifice. On the contrary, they have rejoiced in the event as one of the brightest epochs in memory, the commencement of an upward and ever brightening career. And to you, my Christly friends, I say, cherish no lingerings after the old cup; crush every rising desire for another sip of its contents. The cup you have in your hand has all and more than you want to satisfy your conscience, to strengthen your faculties, to ennoble your existence and beautify your being.

Subject: CHRISTMAS: GOD IN CHRIST.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself."—2 COR. v. 19.

The anniversary of the Redeemer's birth is again dawning on us, and our subject is in harmony with the associations of the season. Two thoughts are brought under our notice:—

I. A wonderful MODE of Divine existence. "God in Christ." The Infinite coming within certain limitations; the Invisible appearing in a human form. "Great is the mystery of godliness," God manifest in the flesh.

First: Though wonderful,

this is not *unreasonable*. The idea of the Divine incarnation is an old idea that has sprung up in the mind of millions of men who have not been blessed with any special revelation; nor is it more unreasonable to suppose that God should appear in man than that He does in material nature, in sun, moon, stars, etc.

Secondly: Though wonderful, it seemed necessary to the work to be *accomplished*. Universal man had contracted guilt, and the guilty conscience had invested the Almighty with attributes of terror that made the soul turn from Him with abhorrence. To save them, required they should be disarmed of this fear, and fired with love towards Him. How could He do this but by appearing in the form of man? If He had appeared as an angel, it would only have intensified the terror and increased the alienation. He appears in human flesh, as a babe, a youth, and a man, and says, "It is I: be not afraid."

Another thought is,—

II. A wonderful WORK OF DIVINE MERCY. "Reconciling the world unto Himself." God is a great worker. He is the eternal fountain of life in unremitting flow. He is essentially active; the mainspring of all activity in the universe, but that of sin. There are at least four organs through which He works—material

laws, animal instincts, moral mind, and Jesus Christ. By the first He carries on the great revolutions of inanimate nature in all its departments; by the second He preserves, guides, and controls all the sentient tribes that populate the earth, the air, and the sea, by the third, through the laws of reason and the dictates of conscience, He governs the vast empire of mind; and by the fourth, viz., Christ, He works out the redemption of sinners. Reconciling the world some read, "a world." There are millions of worlds. We need not ask what world: the human world. (1) The human world in distinction to the world of fallen angels. (2) The human world in distinction to any particular class of the human world—All. Mark, it does not say, He is in Christ reconciling Himself unto the world. The popular theology speaks of Him in this way, but it is unscriptural and blasphemous. There is no vengeance in Him to be appeased; no wrath to be pacified. "Fury is not in Me, saith the Lord."

CONCLUSION.—Brothers, repudiate and denounce with all the energy of your being the idea that Christ reconciles God to the world. But proclaim in all the tones that can melt the heart, that His great mission to the world was to reconcile hostile humanity to Himself.

Seeds of Sermons from the Minor Prophets.

If the Bible as a whole is inspired, it is of vast importance that all its divine ideas should be brought to bear upon the living world of men. Though the pulpit is the organ Divinely intended for this work, it has been doing it hitherto in a miserably partial and restricted method. It selects isolated passages, and leaves whole chapters and books for the most part untouched. Its conduct to the Minor Prophets may be taken as a case in point. How seldom are they resorted to for texts ! and yet they abound with splendid passages throbbing with Divine ideas. It is our purpose to go through this section of the Holy Word : selecting, however, only such verses in each chapter and book as seem the most suggestive of truths of the most vital interest and universal application.

Micah calls himself a Morasthite, because he was a native of Morshethgath, a small town of Judea. He prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah Kings of Judah, and his prophetic mission commenced soon after that of Isaiah. He was contemporary with him as well as with Hosea and Amos. His prophecies were directed to Samaria, the capital city of Israel, also to Jerusalem. Hence we find denunciations against Samaria mingled with prophecies concerning Judah and Jerusalem. One of his predictions, it seems, saved the life of Jeremiah, who would have been put to death for foretelling the destruction of the Temple, had not Micah foretold the same thing one hundred years before.

The book is commonly distributed into three sections : chaps. i. and ii. chaps. iii. to v., chaps. vi. and vii. Each of these opens with a summons to hear God's message, and then proceeds with expostulations and threatenings, which are succeeded by glorious promises.

His style is bold, fiery, and abrupt, and has not a little of the poetic grandeur of Isaiah. His sudden transitions from one subject to another often make his writings difficult to decipher.

No. CXXII.

Subject : BE QUICK.

"Bind the chariot to the swift beast."—MICAH i. 13.

These words are addressed to the inhabitants of Lachish. "This place appears to have formed the link of idolatry between Israel and Judah. Lying on the frontier of the former kingdom, she was the first city in Judah that was led away by the sin of Jeroboam ; and from her the infection spread till at length it reached Jerusalem itself. In the prospect of a sudden attack, it behoved the inhabitants to use all despatch in removing their families and what property they could take with them to a distance. Lachish was besieged by Sennacherib before making the threatened

attack on Jerusalem" (2 Kings xviii. 14).

Our subject is *promptitude in action*. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

I. Be quick in your MATERIAL ENGAGEMENTS. Man has material duties, these are as sacred and as binding as spiritual ones. Indeed, the distinction between the secular and the spiritual is not real, but fictitious. A man should be quick in all his legitimate temporal engagements, whatever they may be. Whatever is to be done must be done at once. "Be diligent in business." By quickness I do not mean the hurry of confusion, but adroit expertness, skilful promptitude. As Shakspeare says, "What the wise do quickly is not done rashly."

First : The quicker you are,

the more you will accomplish. An expert man will accomplish more in an hour than a slow man in a day.

Secondly : The quicker you are, the better for your faculties. The quick movement of the limb is healthier than the slow ; the quick action of the mental faculties is more invigorating than the slow. As a rule, the quick man is in every way healthier and happier than the slow. Thirdly : The quicker you are, the more valuable you are in the market of the world. The skilful man who cultivates the habit of quickness and despatch, increases his commercial value every day. Those trade unions that enact that all of a craft should be paid alike, enact an absurdity and an injustice. One quick and skilful man may accomplish as much in one day as six slow men, though equally clever. Be quick, then, in business. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

II. Be quick in your INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS. You have an enormous amount of mental work to do, if you act up to your duty, and discharge your mission in life. You have manifold faculties to discipline, numerous errors to correct, vast and varied knowledge to attain. "The soul without knowledge is not good." No, not good either to itself or others. Be quick.

First : The quicker you are, the more you will attain. The more fields of truth you will traverse, the more fruits you will gather from the tree of knowledge. Some men in their studies move like elephants, and only traverse a small space. Others, like eagles, sweep con-

tinents in a day. The quick eye will see what escapes the dull eye, the quick ear will catch voices unheard by the slow of hearing.

Secondly : The quicker you are, the better for your faculties. It is the brisk walker that best strengthens his limbs, the brisk fighter that wins the greatest victories. It is by quick action that the steel is polished and that weapons are sharpened. Intellectual quickness whets the faculties, makes them keen, agile, and apt. "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

III. Be quick in your SPIRITUAL AFFAIRS. First : Morally you have a work to do for *your own soul*. It is in a ruined state, it is like the "field of the slothful" and the "vineyard of the man void of understanding" of which Solomon speaks, it needs cultivation. The work is great and urgent. Secondly : Morally you have a work to do for *others*. There are souls around you demanding your most earnest efforts, etc. (1) Be quick ; the work must be done during your life here, if ever done. (2) Be quick ; your life here is very short and uncertain. (3) Be quick ; the longer you delay, the more difficult it is to do. Be quick ; "Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might, for there is no knowledge nor device in the grave whither we are all hastening." "Bind the chariot to the swift beast."

"Oh, let the soul within you

For the truth's sake go abroad ;
Strike ! let every nerve and sinew
'Tell on ages—tell for God."

A. C. Core.

No. CXXIII.

Subject: AVARICE.

“Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily; for this time is evil. In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.”—MICAH ii. 1-4.

The prophet in the preceding chapter foretold the judgment that would befall both kingdoms on account of their apostasy from the living God. He begins this chapter by denouncing the rapacious avarice of their leading men.

Oppression is one of the greatest social crimes, alas! one that has been prevalent in every age and land—a crime this, too, which the Bible denounces with great frequency and with terrific force. Avarice, or greed, is the spring and spirit of all oppression. In the text we have this rapacious avarice presented to us in three aspects.

I. SCHEMING IN THE NIGHT. The avaricious men “devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds.” When avarice takes possession of a man, it works the brain by night as well as by day. It keeps the

intellectual faculties busy in the stillness of nocturnal hours. What schemes to swindle, defraud, and plunder men are fabricated in this London of ours every night upon the pillow! Perhaps there is no passion that takes a stronger hold upon man than this, and that works his intellect with such concentration and constancy. It has been called “the great sepulchre of all other passions.”

II. WORKING IN THE DAY. “When the morning is light, they practise it, because it is in the power of their hand. Delitzsch renders this, “In the light of the morning they carry it out, for their hand is their god.” The idea is, perhaps, what they esteem most, is the worldly gain of their avaricious labour. So it ever is; gain is the god of the greedy man. He sacrifices all his time and labour on its altar. Before it he prostrates his soul. Your avaricious man in the day trots about the streets, the shops, the markets, like a hungry hound in search of food. Shakspeare compares such a man to a whale, which plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him, and at last devours them all at a mouthful. Such whales have I heard of on the land, who never leave gaping till they’ve swallowed the whole parish—church, steeple, bells, and all.

III. SUFFERING IN THE JUDGMENT. “Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks,” etc., etc. Judgment comes at last; and in the judgment these words give us

to understand the punishment will correspond with the sin. "Because they reflect upon evil," says Delitzsch, "to deprive their fellow-men of their possessions, Jehovah will bring evil upon this generation, lay a heavy yoke upon their necks, under which they will not be able to walk loftily or with extended neck." Ay, the time will come when the avaricious millionaire will exclaim, "We be utterly spoiled." "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you," etc.

No. CXXIV.

Subject: GOD'S TRUTH.

"O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the LORD straitened? are these His doings? do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" —MICAH ii. 7.

"Thou called house of Jacob, is the patience of Jehovah short then? or is this His doing? Are not My words good to him that walketh uprightly?" Such is a modern translation. We prefer the translation of Henderson, as follows: "What language, O house of Jacob! Is the Spirit of Jehovah shortened? Are these His operations? Do not My words benefit him that walketh uprightly?"

These words seem to be a reply to an objection raised against the prophets in the preceding verse. The objector did not approve of predictions so terribly severe. "It is not strange," says Matthew Henry, "if people

that are vicious and debauched covet to have ministers that are altogether such as themselves, for they are willing to believe that God is so too." There are people in all congregations who revolt at the proclamation of any doctrines from the pulpit that chime not in with their love of ease and their cherished notions, and especially so if such doctrines are unfamiliar to their ears. They desire the old things to be iterated without end, and with as little change of form and note as possible. The text may be taken as a reproof to such. It says two things to them:—

I. That the SPIRIT of Divine truth cannot be RESTRAINED. "Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?" There is no limit to truth; it is an ocean that has no shore, a field whose ever-springing seeds are innumerable. Men's theological systems, even the largest of them, have narrow limits. They are, as compared to Divine truth, only as a barren rood to a fertile continent; a little sand pool to the mighty Atlantic. It is not "straitened." It has no limit. To every true minister this Spirit has something fresh to suggest, and which he is bound to propound and enforce. "The Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His word."

II. That the PRACTICE of Divine truth CANNOT BUT DO GOOD. "Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Though you have never heard the particular truth before, though it may be too severe to please you, though it may clash with all your

prejudices and wishes, if you practise it, it will do you good.

First: It is to be *practised*. It is not merely for speculation, systematizing, controversy, and debate, it is for inspiring the activities and ruling the life. It is a code rather than a creed; it is not something to play about the brain, the imagination, or the emotions, but to possess, permeate, and transform the whole life. It must be incarnated, made flesh, and dwell in the land.

Secondly: When practised it is a *blessing*. "Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly?" Yes, they do good. When they are translated, not into languages and creeds, but into living deeds. A man gets good only as he builds up a noble character. But what is a good character? It is made up of good habits, and good habits are made up of good acts, and good acts are but the forms and expressions of God's words and ideas.

Homiletical Breviaries.

No. CCIV.

Subject: MAN DIVINELY ABANDONED TO HIS LUSTS.

"So I gave them unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."—PSALM lxxxi. 12.

This Divine abandonment of men to their own lusts is not only one of the greatest, but one of the commonest curses of humanity. Men who persist in sinking the spirit in the senses, burying the soul in the flesh, entombing the conscience in animalism, are divinely damned. Such men abound in this age—an age of rampant materialism. In relation to this abandonment we observe, I. It is an abandonment to a life MOST DEGRADING. In it the man sinks into a brute. The brutal appetites govern him; the brutal pleasures engross his power and absorb his time, he is "carnally sold unto sin." He cleaveth to the dust. We observe, II. It is an abandonment to a life MORALLY ABHORRENT. Is there a more loathsome spectacle in the universe to the rational eye of moral purity, than that of spirit running into swine?—than that of a being having the moral attributes, relations, and form of a man living the mere life of a brute? We observe, III. It is an abandonment to a life of RUIN. (1) The *law* of its enjoyments is *decrease*. The animal pleasures of men,

unlike their intellectual and spiritual, decrease in their power of delectation by repetition. Age deadens the nerves, and "desire faileth," and gradually the once delicious palls on the soul. It gradually brings on the awful, crushing *ennui*. (2) The *continuation* of its enjoyments is necessarily *short*. Disease and death terminate them. (3) The *memory* of its enjoyments must become morally *painful*—"Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime," etc., etc.

CONCLUSION.—When the Holy Book speaks of men in their unregenerated state as dead and buried, its representations are scarcely figurative, but terribly literal. Souls are in their graves here—walking graves it is true. The corrupt world is a moral cemetery. Oh that the predicted hour would strike, when the gospel trumpet shall sound so electrically, that all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and start to spiritual life.

No. CCV.

Subject: A SOUL CONSCIOUS OF ITS DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

"Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."—PSALM cxix. 133.

This is the language of a soul conscious of its dependence on the Almighty; and here it cries for two things: I. FOR GUIDANCE, "order my steps." The human spirit is destined to move on and on for ever. It needs a guide; it cannot guide itself, nor can any finite creature do so. There is but one safe Guide. If He "order" our "steps," two evils will be avoided. (1) Moral stumblings. Souls are everywhere stumbling on the path of life, they fall, and often receive *fatal* injuries. "Hold Thou me up and I shall be safe." The other evil avoided will be (1) Unhappy destination. The path of life, whilst it may have no real end, but run on through ages interminable, has *one awful crisis* that decides the ultimate fate of the traveller, and that crisis is death. If He order the steps of the soul, the crisis will be the constant brightening and beautifying of the path. It cries here, —II. FOR EMANCIPATION: "Let not any iniquity have dominion over me." (1) This is the *worst* of despotisms. (a) It is the most criminal. There are despotisms social and political that are calamities, not crimes: the poor victim cannot avoid them. Not so the despotism of sin. A despotism which, in the first place, he

never ought to have allowed ; but having allowed, he should break away from and become heroic and free. (b) It is the most powerful. A man might become such a victim of worldly despotism as to be imprisoned in a dungeon and cut off from all fellowship with living men. Still his soul may be free. Like Paul and Silas, he might exult in a freedom that no despot can touch. But sin manacles the soul, shuts out its light, and binds its faculties in chains mightier than adamant. (c) It is the most enduring. Death will put an end to all worldly despotisms ; in the grave the slave is free from his tyrant. But death has no power to put an end to this slavery of the soul. (2) This is the most prevalent of despotisms. Social and political despotisms, alas ! are widespread, but are not world-wide ; there are sunny districts of freedom ; but this despotism is co-extensive with the world of unregenerate humanity.

CONCLUSION.—Ever let us look earnestly to heaven for guidance and freedom.

No. CCVI.

Subject: RELIEVING THOUGHTS CONCERNING DEATH.

“I know that ‘Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.’”—JOB xxx. 23.

The text suggests some thoughts of Job concerning his own death. Every man must die, and every man may feel concerning his own death three things that have a tendency to make the soul calm, and even brave in the prospect : I. There will be nothing UNNATURAL in my death. It is “appointed” as the death of every other kind of organized life on earth ; it is the natural law of all organized bodies, to wear out, decay, dissolve. As the earth takes back to itself all the elements that have entered into the composition of vegetables and animals, why should I refuse or dread the demand ? I may rest assured that kind nature will make a benign and beneficent use of all the elements that have entered into my corporeal existence. Let me be ready to yield them up unreluctantly, ungrudgingly, thanking the Infinite for their use. (1) It is *dishonest* for me to object to this ; for my body was only borrowed property, a temporary loan, nothing more. (2) It is *ungrateful* for me to object to this. Though I never had a claim to such a boon, it has been of great service to my spiritual nature. (3) It is *unphilosophic* for me to object to this. Whatever my objections and resistance, it must come. II. There will be

nothing UNCOMMON in my death. "The house appointed for all living." Were I one of a few, amongst the millions of the race, singled out for such a destiny, I might complain ; but since all, without any exception, must die, who am I that I should complain ? Since Abraham and all the patriarchs, Isaiah and all the prophets, Paul and all the apostles, Luther and all the reformers, Milton and all the poets, Xavier and all the missionaries, up to the present period, have gone, why should I feel a moment's reluctance to join them in the mighty house ? The fathers, where are they ? and the prophets, do they live for ever ? III. There will be nothing ACCIDENTAL in my death. "I know that Thou wilt bring me to death." I shall not die because of any fortuitous incident, or because of any fatalistic force, but because my Father brings me to the grave. "Thou turnest man to dust, Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." There are no accidental deaths, no premature graves. The eternal, all-loving Father brings us to death.

No. CCVII.

Subject: THE RICH DISCIPLE.

"A rich man."—MATTHEW xxvii. 57.

He was rich—I. In MEANS. Some are rich in money only. How poor are they ! To hold money, is nothing ; to use it for the highest good, is rapture ! II. In SILENCE. Had the courage to hold his tongue. How few regret that they kept silence ! III. In PATIENCE. Valuable the hostility and salutary the fear which leads a man in silence to spin the silken thread of patience, waiting for the kingdom of God. IV. In COURAGE. Mark says, he went *boldly* and begged the body of Jesus. The result of silent patience is surprising might. V. In SERVICE. Timely, distinguished, unique, essential, personal. Did he, unaided, draw the nails, wrap the body, carry it to rest ? Nicodemus carrying his hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Heroic burden-bearers. He is rich—VI. In PRAISE. Blessed be the day when thou wast born. Thy daring devotion in the darkest hour has brought thee imperishable renown !

H. T. MILLER.

Liverpool.

Scientific Facts used as Symbols.

"Books of Illustration" designed to help preachers, are somewhat, we think, too abounding. They are often made up to a great extent of anecdotes from the sentimental side of life, and not always having a healthful influence or historic foundation. We find that preachers and hearers are getting tired of such. Albeit illustrations are needed by every speaker who would interest the people, and are sanctioned by the highest authority. Nature itself is a parable. Hence we have arranged with a naturalist who has been engaged in scientific investigation for many years, to supply the *Homilist* with such reliable and well-ascertained facts in nature as cultured and conscientious men may use with confidence, as mirrors of morals and diagrams of doctrines.

Subject: The Rattlesnake,—Vice giving Warning of its Approach.

THERE are evils which give warning of their coming. Drunkenness does not seize upon a man suddenly. It gives warnings often and many. Avarice and a number of other vices can be detected long before we are within their reach. There are infallible indications by which we may be warned. The approach of vice is like the approach of the rattlesnake. This horrible reptile, one of the most venomous of serpents, warns man involuntarily against its formidable presence. At the end of its tail there is placed a rattle, which consists of a string of hollow, dry, semi-transparent bones, which constantly clatter against each other as the reptile moves, with a hoarse, dull, echoing sound. The bony rings increase in number with the reptile's age; and it gains an additional one, it is said, at each casting of the skin. The warning which it is thus compelled to give of its approach enables those who hear to escape an awful death. Happy are those men whose ears are open to the warnings which social monsters, far more horrid than the rattlesnake, in like manner invariably give of their presence and movements, and profiting thereby, manage to escape.

Subject: The Sparrow,—The Vigorous Mind requires a Healthy Atmosphere.

A WEAK, enervated mind may live in a sickly atmosphere of cant or artificiality which would be incompatible with

the life of a healthy mind. In this case weakness and enervation, paradoxical as it appears, are able to endure more than strength and vigour.

A sparrow left in a bell glass to breathe over and over again the same air, will live in it for upwards of three hours ; but at the close of the second hour,—when there is consequently still air of sufficient purity to permit of the sparrow breathing it for more than an hour longer,—if a fresh and vigorous sparrow be introduced, such an one will expire almost immediately. The air which would suffice for the respiration of the one sparrow, suffocates another. Nay, more, if the sparrow be taken from the glass at the close of the third hour, when very feeble, be restored to activity and sufficient vigour to fly about again, then, if once more, in its now healthy state, introduced into the atmosphere from which it was taken, it will perish immediately. The poisonous action of a vitiated air is better resisted by the feeble, sickly, organism than by the vigorous, healthy, organism.

Subject: The Tanghinia, a Fallacious Test.

MAN frequently satisfies himself that he has come to an accurate conclusion, merely because, on the application of what he considers an infallible test, he discovers a particular anticipated result. Often enough the test is utterly fallacious.

The Tanghir, or Tanyer, is the only plant of its genus, and is confined to Madagascar. Its poisonous seed is esteemed by the natives an infallible criterion of guilt or innocence. After being pounded, a small piece is swallowed by the supposed criminal. If he be cursed with a strong stomach which retains the poison, he speedily dies, and is held guilty ; if his feeble digestion rejects it, he necessarily escapes, and his innocence is considered proven.

Now it is obvious to any educated mind, that innocence and guilt are in no way disclosed by this process ; yet, inasmuch as it has been accepted as a test, its results are unquestioned

And there are numberless instances in which English society consents to be governed by results of tests, simply because those tests are generally accepted. Again and again it becomes important to inquire, whether, supposing your test does disclose a given result, that test is really as infallible as you deem it to be. They will be found to be only Tanghir tests, and, as such, utterly fallacious.

The Pulpit and its Handmaids.

IN MEMORIAM : REV. DAVID THOMAS, B. A., OF BRISTOL.—No one, not even a passing stranger, could have been in our city last Friday and seen the immense and impressive procession that mournfully wended its way to Arno's Vale without feeling that the shadow of no ordinary death had fallen on our neighborhood. For forty years, he who was being carried to the grave, had, with a short interval occasioned by illness, fulfilled his ministry in our city. That ministry, as you know, was marked by such vigour and freshness, such grand individuality, such far-reaching sympathy, and such reality, that it was the joy and pride of his fellow-ministers, and an untold power for the highest good to multitudes who have passed into the heavens, as well as to many who still survive, to realize as long as life lasts their irreparable loss.

My own feelings towards him are far too reverential to allow me to attempt anything like an analysis of his mind and character. Coming here, as I came,

to begin a very youthful ministry, knowing that he bore the name, and was the friend of my own beloved father, I seemed instinctively to look to him for fatherliness, so far as I might need it here. And I never once looked in vain. The protectiveness, the tenderness, the wondrous humility, that, as one remembered the contrast between us, almost awed one, made me realize what could be meant by the term, "Father in Christ." There are many more besides who will ever associate with his stature, his figure, his countenance, his tones, the huge tenderness and chastened strength that they most fitly expressed. So that when we say, "His works do follow him," we think not only of the sermons of this "preacher of righteousness," nor of the manifold activities of his ministry, but also of the influence that radiates from his character, and that pulses in all our memories of him.

And now he "rests from his labours." His intellectual keenness and grasp, his rich

vein of humour, his delight in scenery, his penetration of, and sympathy with men, his joy in his home, contributed many pleasures to one to whom Christ had given His great gift of peace. But now his rest is perfect. Hence on, whatever broke that rest or troubled that great soul is for ever past.

There is not one amongst us in this city who were associated with him, who would not place some wreath of honour and love on his grave. The tried and trusted friend, the princely leader, is gone. Head and shoulder above most—physically, intellectually, spiritually, he naturally became our king. Like Elisha, we know that our Elijah is gone up into heaven, but mourn that our leader is taken from us to-day.

Bristol. U. R. THOMAS.

TRUE PREACHING.—The true secret of success in preaching, does not consist merely in eloquence, or in vigour of thought, or in ability of exposition. All these qualities may exist in abundance, and a man may yet be destitute of the one faculty which distinguishes the preacher from an orator, an advocate, or a divine. This faculty is that of speaking as man to man, with the life of personal experience and personal sympathy. The great majority of sermons, however rhetorically delivered, are simply essays. They are compositions upon a theme, not the expressions of a man's own heart and mind. We do not say this in disparagement of their authors.

There are but few men comparatively speaking who can bring their minds into direct contact with the truths and facts of life, and who, having done so, can give expression to both the process and results of their experience. But it is by virtue of this power that preaching still holds its place in the world. In these days of many books, no man need hear a sermon for the sake of mere mental instruction. But the voice of a living man speaking to us out of his own life, carries with it more practical illumination than many essays. Without knowing it, he touches chords in our own hearts, interprets half-conscious questionings, and leads us with him by a more irresistible influence than that of logic. To do this, indeed, he requires rare qualifications. He need not be a powerful original genius, but he must be original so far as to look at every question and every experience for himself, and to bring his own heart into fresh and direct contact with it. He must enter, moreover, into the problems, difficulties, theories, and the half-understood truths which are stirring the world about him. In the faith he proclaims we look to him to find a key and an interpretation for those perplexities of life, and a guide to lead us through them; and if we find that he understands us and leads us forward with a good heart and in a true spirit, he is sure to be welcomed and followed.—*The Times*, Nov. 27, 1875.

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and I am sure they will be up for a
little while longer about our very much
to the very young children and the
I hope to find some way to help you
dressed & you ~~can~~ Could not tell
the they had not a very long time to
and about the water it is a very
unpleasant one which they can't see

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